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BOBBED HAIR

*By Twenty
Famous Authors*

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GRINNALDS-TWYFORD
COLLECTION PRESENTED TO THE
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA
BY
MR. AND MRS. JEFFERSON C. GRINNALDS
AS A MEMORIAL TO HIS MOTHER
ROBERTA SARAH TWYFORD

B O B B E D H A I R

BY
TWENTY AUTHORS

<i>Carolyn Wells</i>	<i>Meade Minnigerode</i>
<i>Alexander Woolcott</i>	<i>Dorothy Parker</i>
<i>Louis Bromfield</i>	<i>H. C. Witwer</i>
<i>Elsie Janis</i>	<i>Sophie Kerr</i>
<i>Edward Streeter</i>	<i>Robert Gordon Anderson</i>
<i>Kermit Roosevelt</i>	<i>George Barr McCutcheon</i>
<i>Bernice Brown</i>	<i>Gerald Mygatt</i>
<i>Wallace Irwin</i>	<i>George Agnew Chamberlain</i>
<i>Frank Craven</i>	<i>John V. A. Weaver</i>
<i>Rube Goldberg</i>	<i>George Palmer Putnam</i>

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The Knickerbocker Press
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Made in the United States of America

It's pleasurable appropriate for one who had a deal to do with the literary fortunes of Connemara, to dedicate this book of hers to that good judge of good fiction

PEARL KEATING

whose prompt enthusiasm enrolled Constance Mary Moore at once among the classics of the screen.

G. P. P.

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CHAPTER I
By CAROLYN WELLS

BOBBED HAIR

CHAPTER I

CONNEMARA sat, absorbed in her own reflections. This statement is to be taken physically as well as mentally, for the reflections she saw were the subject of the reflections she thought.

She could easily see six or seven Connemaras, for her triplicate dressing-table mirror, aided and abetted by a hand glass, gave her various and sundry views of her hair. She studied it in deepest meditation, and critical at that, as who should say, a poor thing, but mine own.

Yet it was not a poor thing. Moderately long, moderately thick, moderately curly, its color was—well, Connemara had spent her childish days largely in stamping her foot and shouting back at teasing schoolmates, “It isn’t red, it’s orburn!”

Of course she had more of a proper name than that. She had been christened Constance Mary,

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but in her earliest attempts at conversation, lingual ineptitude had brought forth only Connemara, and the name had clung. Her other name was Moore.

For the rest, she was a slender little thing, light and graceful of movement, possessing more temper than temperament and more wit than wisdom.

These traits, in connection with the color of her hair in certain lights, had caused her to be dubbed Cayenne Fairy, and she lived up to the title.

Her boudoir, where she sat, was harmoniously colored in green and white. Even the books were all bound in green, with white leaves inside. From the window she could look out on the green tops of waving trees and on down to the lake, green with reflected foliage.

But Connemara wasn't looking out of the window. She was looking at her own hair, in the repeated reflections of the mirror panels.

"I don't know," she said, half aloud, "I don't know——"

"Don't know what, Connie?" And a figure appeared at her open door. A calm, placid figure, that might have been, nay, *must* have been the inspiration for the poem that begins, "Serene I fold my hands and wait."

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“Whether to bob my hair or not,” and Cayenne Fairy turned anxious, troubled eyes toward her Aunt Celimena.

This lady was perhaps half a century old, was as bony as a suspender button, and was, with fine, patient resignation, an old maid. With the idiosyncrasies that spinsters are capable of developing, she had made up her mind that, having herself proved the inconveniences of single life, her niece should not experience them—she would forestall any such nonsense.

Now Miss Celimena Moore was a born forestaller, and when she set her mind to forestalling she did it efficiently and effectively.

Connemara was devoted to Moorelands, the big old country place in the pleasant hills of Connecticut, and Miss Moore merely decreed that if her niece was not married by her twenty-first birthday, the estate should pass into the hands of trustees to be used forever as a children’s home. If, however, Connemara proved amenable to reason, and selected one from her shoals of suitors, and announced her engagement in June and was married in October, the place and fortune of her rich aunt would eventually become her own.

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It sounds melodramatic, in the telling, but Miss Celimena was so deeply in earnest, and Miss Connemara so deeply attached to the place, that the matter was serious to the point of tragedy.

Moreover, it was the next to the last day of June, and in another twenty-four hours the limit of the time appointed would be uncomfortably near.

Connemara was not entirely unprepared. She had narrowed her possibilities down to two, but between this precious pair she felt unable to make choice.

“Is everybody bobbing?” Aunt Celly asked, politely disinterested. She cared little for passing fashions.

“Of course. You’ll come to it yourself soon. But with me it’s more than a whim or a notion; it’s the whole game.”

“Is it? Well, never mind that now. Are you going to announce your engagement tomorrow night?”

“Oh, yes,” Connemara sighed. “Of course I am. But I’ve no idea to whom.”

“Nonsense! You must know which one you love.”

“That’s just it. I love them both—I adore them both. I can’t live without both of them. You see, Aunt Celly, they’re such perfect complements. It’s

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like bread and butter or ham and eggs. Useless each without the other."

"Don't be silly!"

"I'm not. I want to marry both of them—oh, not both at once: I couldn't, of course. But say, first one and then the other. Only I don't know which to marry first."

"You talk like a fool, Constance Mary. I've no patience with you. But you'll have to make up your mind pretty soon, for I shall make no change in my will."

She walked placidly away, leaving the girl reflecting among her reflections.

The two men were complementary, though exact opposites.

Bingham Carrington, a tall fair Viking of a man, was a Southerner, from Raleigh or Richmond or Roanoke or some such place, while Saltonstall Cabot Adams was a New Englander of purest ray serene.

Both men were desperately in love with the Cayenne Fairy, and while Adams was a rich man, Carrington had an unappeased desire for ducks and drakes, and yearned to make them out of Connemara's money.

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Yet Bing was a bright, merry, sun-shiny sort of person, while Saltonstall was so serious as to be almost heavy, so erudite as to be almost dull.

A side of Connemara's nature craved this cultural background, yearned for this companionship of wisdom and intellectuality, even while another side of her soul cried out for Bing's overflowing, all-embracing affection.

With an uncertain sigh, Connemara put up her unbobbed hair, and arrayed herself to greet a merry house party coming to spend the week-end.

They came: Poppy Glenn, a red-cheeked, red-lipped brunette, sporting the very latest style of bob cut. Rose Wraye, Madonna type, endowed with endearing young charms, but scorning to let scissors touch her long, fair tresses. Beside the two men there were Richard Bird, naturally called Dicky, and Cecil Percy Knapp, the artist.

The fun began at once. They were a noisy young lot, there was racing and chasing o'er Canobie Lee, there was guying and flirting and petting and all the modern substitutes for Shakespeare and the musical glasses.

And beneath it all the undercurrent of excitement, wondering what Connemara meant to do.

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Late that evening she had two sessions, one with each of her chosen knights.

Bing was first. They walked down the paths to the rambler arbor and sat there, while he pleaded his cause with real eloquence. He was a perfect courtier, and his manners were more than perfect. He could rise at the appearance of a lady, without looking as if he had just heard the first notes of "The Star Spangled Banner." He could hold her cape for her without the effect of hanging out the Monday wash. He was intensely modern, up to date, and a little beyond.

"Of course, you'll marry me, my Cayenne Fairy Queen," he exulted. "We are each other's own, twin halves of a perfect soul made one, and all that. You never could stand that hatchet-faced, beetle-browed, lantern-jawed, gimlet-eyed old Pilgrim Puritan of a Salt Adams. You know you couldn't. And I want you to have your hair bobbed tomorrow, and tomorrow night at the dance we'll tell all and sundry our precious secret. How about it, my honey-blossom off of a peach tree?"

"I'll see, Bing. I don't know—really I don't yet. But I'll decide tomorrow, of course, and I'll—I'll let you know."

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"Good! If you decide against me, don't bother to forward the information. But you won't—you can't. Oh, my little Connemara, nobody could love you as I will—as I do. Star of my soul——"

"I know, Bing—I know. But run now, Saltonstall is coming here. If I decide on you, I'll have my hair bobbed tomorrow, and if I take him, I won't. So you'll know."

Carrington went reluctantly, and Adams came to the arbor, where Connemara had promised him an interview.

It was a stormy one. Salt had a temper equal to Connemara's own, and the two struck sparks.

"I shan't make love to you," he declared, "until you say you will marry me. Why should I waste kisses on a girl who may be another's wife? But Connemara, don't I beg of you, *don't* make the mistake of accepting Bing Carrington. He's a fortune hunter, a wastrel, a spendthrift. He cares only for the silly, bobbed-haired flapper sort. He'd make you one of that ilk, and it is not your *métier*! Come to me, Fairy darling, we will have pleasures of the intellect, of the mind, of the soul, such as that village cut up can't even understand! I will love you with a devotion, an idolatry, all the deeper and finer

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and sweeter because of our mental development, our psychic——”

“Cut it out, Connemara!” called Poppy Glenn’s shrill voice as she and Dicky Bird intruded themselves upon the scene.

Others followed, and before them all Cayenne Fairy gave her ultimatum.

“I’ll decide this matter myself,” she said, as they all flung advice at her at once. “Tomorrow, I’ll run down to New York, and back, in time for dinner. If I get my hair bobbed while I’m there, it’s ‘cause I mean to marry Bing. If I come back with my hair as is, it’s a sure sign Salt is the man.”

Cheers greeted this speech, and there was a sound of revelry by night that dismissed for the time being the subject under discussion.

The next afternoon Connemara went to New York. The whole crowd went along, but she went alone into the hairdresser’s parlors.

Her going did not necessarily mean a bob: she was as undecided as ever when she advanced to the desk to keep her appointment.

She had arranged by telephone that she was to have the time, and if she concluded at the last

BOBBED HAIR

minute not to have her hair bobbed, she would pay for the time and keep her locks intact.

The lady at the desk smiled and waved her to an appointed cubicle, where pretty bobbed-haired girls let down her auburn mass and brushed it out.

Then the man with the shears came in. Connemara had a vivid remembrance of the picture in "Struwpeter" where the great shears open to cut off Conrad's thumbs.

"Wait a minute," she said convulsively, almost hysterically, as he drew the white apron closer about her neck.

He waited, shears open and poised above her head as she watched him in the mirror.

As in a dream the visions whirred across her mind. Life with Bing, happy, debonair, good-natured: life with Salt, clever, deep thinker, distinguished.

Bing, aflame with Southern ardor of devotion. Salt, quivering with passionate idolatry. Bing, triumph of muscular perfection, victor of all out-door sports; Salt, mentally great, full of imagination and creative genius. Oh, *which* should it be?

The shears hovered. In the mirror she saw the puzzled face of the barber as he wondered at her indecision.

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She held her future poised on the clip of those shining blades. A word from her and the first clip would proclaim her irrevocably pledged to Bing Carrington. Or a mere protest would close those steel arbiters of Fate, and she would be the bride of the worthy scion of the Adams family.

Suddenly, like a flash, illumination came. Her inner soul spoke, the truth appeared to her—she knew!

When Connemara rejoined the crowd who waited for her, they stared at her radiant face. Eagerly they looked at her hair, but her small tight-fitting *cloche* of a hat was drawn down closely over her whole head, and no hint could be gained as to the state of Cayenne Fairy's hair.

Nor did any dare to snatch off the hat and solve the question. Connemara was not one to stand that.

"You'll know soon enough," she said, and her dazzling smile included the two men most interested, as well as the rest of the noisy, rollicking group.

Home they went and off to dress for dinner.

Surely at dinner they must learn the truth, and could then toast the health of the engaged ones.

But at dinner Connemara appeared with a head-dress of silver gauze, wound turbanlike round her

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head. Skillfully, too, so that no hint of shape or size should betray her secret.

"Oh, well," said Bing cheerily, "you'll have to show down tonight. The fancy-dress dance will last beyond midnight, and at twelve you'll have to confess."

"I will," and Cayenne Fairy laughed happily.

"I know her costumes," said Rose Wraye. "She has a stunning Ophelia rig that she's going to wear if she didn't bob, and a Peter Pan costume that she'll sport about in if her hair is short."

Connemara nodded agreement to this, and later on, when they all went up to don their fancy ball garb, the girls paused in the room of Cayenne Fairy and saw spread out on her bed the two costumes Rose had told of.

They left her, and Connemara closed her door and locked it.

Then she sat down again to her reflections. In the triplicate panel of the dressing table, repeated in the hand-glass she held, her lovely Titian hair gleamed in its auburn glory.

Connemara looked at the two costumes on the bed and smiled.

Passing them by, she took from a wardrobe a

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box and opened it. From it she took a full costume which she quickly donned, deftly adjusting its long white folds.

Soon, completely attired, she went and listened over the banister. Yes, the guests were assembled; Aunt Celimena was serenely receiving them.

She paused at the top of the stairs a moment. "It's a shame to tantalize them longer," she mused, "but I must—just for a few minutes, anyway."

She went slowly downstairs and entered the dancing room. A cheer greeted her appearance which turned to a groan of impatience and exasperation as they saw her face, saintlike and beautiful, swathed about by the coifed headdress that belonged to her garb of a Dominican Sister.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Carolyn Wells", with a horizontal line underneath the name.

CHAPTER II

By ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT

CHAPTER II

WHEN it dawned even on the remote and only mildly interested members of the orchestra that the evasive Connemara had found a way to defer her announcement yet a little longer, they flung themselves into the breach with a hubbub of music, and in another minute the long room of Moorelands resembled a kaleidoscope in a state of agitation. But a refreshed topic of conversation had come as a boon to the house party, and even those whose small talk was usually exhausted when they had commented on the perfectly splendid dance floor and the perfectly splendid orchestra were kept going indefinitely by their speculations on the invisible locks of Connemara.

Thus the perky Miss Glenn knew, when Adam Brewster asked her for the first dance, that dancing was the last, or almost the last, thing he would have cared to do with her. Mr. Brewster was a withered gentleman of slightly malignant aspect who knew all

BOBBED HAIR

there was to know about Moorelands and the Moore family except for the single detail about the hair of the heir apparent. He was Miss Celimena's lawyer and had been her father's lawyer before that. Without long and acrimonious discussion with Mr. Brewster, Miss Celimena had never bought a bond or paid a tax, and every one knew that the singular document in which the fate of Moorelands was conditioned had been composed with great gusto by Mr. Brewster. Wherefore Miss Glenn, when the lawyer led her firmly to a seat against the wall and sat down beside her, knew that she was expected to interpret the situation for him.

"I am afraid that our dear Connie is being just a bit theatrical," she said at once, "but I know what's at the bottom of it."

"Perversity?" asked Mr. Brewster.

"Not at all," said Miss Glenn. "Panic."

"Panic?" the old lawyer exclaimed. "When both her alternatives are so agreeable?"

"Oh, they're all right, I suppose. But you'll have to admit that Bing is the kind that calls her his Cayenne Fairy Queen. That must be very fatiguing. And Salt raves on about the pleasures of the intellect."

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“How do you know?”

“I eavesdrop, Mr. Brewster. Don’t you?”

“Never.”

“Well, one picks up a lot that way. For instance, I listened in when you and that law clerk from your office were whispering away there under the stairs. That’s how I know you have planted him here in case you should need a witness at twelve o’clock. You lawyers are pretty crafty, but I do think that little trap for Connemara isn’t quite airtight.”

“Ah, a loophole, eh?” said Mr. Brewster with an indulgent smile.

“An enormous one. She has to announce her engagement before the end of June, and she has to marry by October. Very true. But it doesn’t have to be the same man.”

Mr. Brewster grunted.

“I wonder if Connemara has noticed that,” mused Miss Glenn, brightening visibly at the thought of how easily she could make a little trouble. “I think I’ll have to go and tell her.”

It was really to detain her there with him that Mr. Brewster went on talking.

“But panic?” he asked. “If she’s already decided, why——”

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"Oh, my dear Mr. Brewster, you've never known any woman except Miss Celimena, which misleads you frightfully. Of course, it's because she has decided that Connemara is so frightened now. Busily pushed from behind by her aunt and her aunt's lawyer, she has shut her eyes, jumped over the precipice—and then—well, behold her hanging by a slender branch."

Mr. Brewster seemed unaffected by the picture. "She will have to drop before twelve o'clock," he said.

"But that's nearly three hours away," mused Miss Glenn. "And so many things can happen in three hours."

"As for instance?"

"Well, the world might come to an end at 11:30. Or Miss Celimena might weaken."

"I agree with you," said Mr. Brewster, "that those two events are likely to occur at about the same time."

"Or a beautiful young ruffian might step out of the syringa bushes and carry her off in his arms."

"I should think," said Mr. Brewster, "that she would rather prefer crashing on the rocks below."

ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT

"I told you," retorted Miss Glenn, "that you had never known any woman except Miss Celimena."

Meanwhile, this good lady, along whose path in life the syringa bushes had given forth nothing but a refined fragrance, was restlessly on the prowl. The dances at Moorelands had begun at 8:30 in her youth, and they still began at 8:30 even if she alone was ready at that hour.

Usually she drifted on the fringe of the dance floor, indicating with a skillful shoulder blade and an expert eyebrow that the daughters of her old neighbors were disporting themselves in an unseemly manner. But this evening she was alive to nothing but the discomfort caused by the fact that, partly through her own unacknowledged fault, the peace of Moorelands was disturbed by the rowdy commotions of melodrama.

The heroine of this gaudy play was dancing with simple earnestness. As the orchestra paused for breath and just as the two suitors were starting to waste theirs on the hidden ears of Connemara, her aunt advanced upon her formidably, detached her from some limber but socially negligible partner, and led her out on to the veranda. A young and affectionate couple, who had retreated to its shadows in

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response to some primeval instincts, scented the approach of a family scene and scuttled obligingly into the house.

Connemara, outwardly serene in the mild garb of the nun, sat on the rail of the veranda, leaned her secretive head against its weather-beaten pillar and looked out across the acres that could be hers at the drop of a hat—or at least of a bandeau, cap, and veil. The local fireflies were doing their best to make Moorelands seem festive. A mile or so away there was a faint glow in the sky. That was Stamford.

Nearer by there was an occasional twinkle in the darkness—one of the several battered farmhouses where tenants had once toiled for old Daniel Moore, but which had been taken over of late years by refugees from the pueblo cliffs of New York.

The once orthodox countryside, dotted with something like peasantry that had doffed respectful hats to young Miss Celimena as she drove smartly along the roads in her shining phaeton, was now infested with a strange riffraff of column conductors, feminist agitators, comedienne, and music critics. These not only did not doff their hats; they didn't wear any. And even Miss Celimena knew that the pretentious names which adorned their reclaimed cot-

ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT

tages were affixed in derision of that delusion of grandeur which had possessed her revered father when, after accumulating his fortune, he turned ducal on a surprised neighborhood and named his estate Moorelands—for all the world as though it were a shooting box in Devonshire.

Thus one of these new neighbors had named his tottering cottage “The Ricketts” and another—a brilliant young Jew from Harvard—had sardonically hung out a sign which announced to the offended Miss Moore that the name of his house was “The Hebrewst.”

“My dear Constance,” her aunt began in a tone which suggested that by “dear” she meant “expensive.”

“Yes, aunt.”

“You are so like your dear mother tonight. She could never merely come into a room. She always had to make what that actor friend of yours calls an entrance.”

“Yes, aunt.”

There was a pause. Miss Celimena broke it. “I would like to know what is under that headdress of yours.”

“Thoughts, Aunt Celimena.”

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"What a change!" observed her aunt gloomily. "I think a penny would be an exorbitant charge for them."

Connemara chuckled. "You're quite right," she admitted cheerfully. "I was thinking as it happens about that Mrs. Buxton who got into one of your luncheons by mistake. That Mrs. Malaprop. You remember. She was the one who said her daughter had gone to a masquerade in the garbage of a nun."

There was another pause—an acrid pause. This time it was the old grandfather's clock in the hall which broke it. Both of them counted as its sweet bell rang ten times.

"Well," said Miss Celimena, gathering her shawl about her, "you have two hours in which to indulge yourself in this fiddle-faddle. I suppose it would be asking a good deal to expect any one of your generation to repay a lifetime of affection by a little courtesy, but it would add to my somewhat impaired enjoyment of this party if you would assure me that you intend to take off that contraption before you hear that clock strike twelve."

"I promise, aunt," she said, and added speculatively, "before I hear that clock strike twelve."

Miss Celimena's resentful skirts swished against

ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT

the French window, and Connemara was alone on the veranda. The orchestra had subsided with a final snort and the only sound came from the lawn, where a sprinkler whirred in the darkness or from across the hedge where a streak of light told of some automobile heading for Stamford and New York. The night air was sweet with syringa.

And at that moment one of those cars slowed down and stopped—stopped alongside the road as if its driver had begun to have suspicions about its internals and was minded to peer under its hood. That, as a matter of fact, was just what had happened, and when young David Lacy finally straightened up he was aware that someone had stepped out of the darkness and was standing in the dusk that lay beside the path of light his lamps were making. It was a woman in white and, in a voice which he later decided was the loveliest sound he had ever heard, she spoke to him thus simply and to the point:

“If that car will run now, I think I’ll go with you. Where are you going?”

“To Paris,” he replied happily.

“You can’t go all the way in that.”

“Sad, isn’t it?” he agreed. “But I hadn’t thought

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of attempting it. I was planning to transfer in New York to a boat which sails tomorrow morning."

"Well," said the voice, "I'll be leaving you before that."

For a fleeting instant Lacy thought of all the tales he had heard about the wicked folk who ask you for a ride and who, just when you are obligingly speeding along the road, press sudden revolvers against your ribs and then make off with all your portable wealth. This apprehension had short shrift. For the potential brigand stepped forward into the light of his lamps and he saw he was talking with a Dominican nun. Her head was bent a little, so he could not see her face clearly, but he had a conviction—it must have been her voice, and the way she moved—that she was young, and probably beautiful.

"Excuse me," he murmured, in vague apology for a dozen unspoken thoughts, and helped her without more ado into the seat beside his own. They had been driving steadily for twenty minutes and were slackening their speed in a small snarl of traffic in the outskirts of Greenwich when they looked at each other and smiled.

"You are running away, aren't you?" he ventured.

ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT

"How long have you known that?" she asked.

"For quite a time back. But I didn't know how to address you. I don't yet. I practiced saying: 'Where are you going, Sister?' But it somehow sounded rowdy. And I don't feel rowdy. You see, I don't know much about nuns. Don't you all have Latin names? Like Sister Benedictine, or something like that?"

"Yes, something like that," she agreed, smiling. Then she added as an afterthought: "They call me Con Amore."

"Well, then, Sister Con Amore," he began, and lapsed at once into another silence. Out of his jumble of thoughts, several questions kept rising to the surface and lingering there unspoken. Wasn't Con Amore Italian, anyway? And why had he thought he wanted to go to Paris? And why—above all why—should the same slim and lovely person put on not only the white dismissive cloth of the Dominican nun, but also a perfume? It was a wicked and worldly perfume—a beckoning perfume.

"I hope you're not going to ask me any questions," she put in gently. "It is so pleasant to ride along like this. It is so pleasant to ride in silence along the road that leads away from Trouble."

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"I am glad," he said, "if that's what we are doing. To think that I drove past Trouble and never saw it in the darkness. I suppose I might have known?"

"How might you have known?" she asked, for she really did not care much about silence.

"I had been told," he explained, "that it was not far from New York."

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Alexander Drowne".

CHAPTER III
By LOUIS BROMFIELD

CHAPTER III

IT was a night filled with a sense of the imminent, one of those nights when the very air, for all its softness and the frail, trailing scent of syringa, was vibrant with the unexpected, the remote, possibly even the tragic. Even to Lacy, a man sophisticated, worldly, experienced as neither the boisterous Bing or the intellectual Adams was experienced, understood this. There was in him nothing of the primitive which colored the rude gestures and the passion of the Southerner, nor anything cold, fishlike, of the intellectual penetration which distinguished the Bostonian. He was, in short, a man who lived by his senses, without reflection, without worrying very profoundly about the reasons or the motives of any action. He took what came his way, and in this fashion he had taken a great many ladies, of one sort or another.

Now as he sat at the wheel of the purring Isotta-

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Franchini, with a perfumed and renegade nun by his side, his mind slowly turned over adventures of the past. One by one he recounted his conquests. . . . Not all of them perhaps, but at least the major ones—those which might have been underlined in red. . . . Blanquita, the Argentine dancer; place, London; time, in full season. Frau Sembacher; place, the Black Forest; time, late spring, harebells and columbines flowering among the black trunks of the trees, an elderly husband in the background taking the cure celebrated far and wide for its purgative qualities. The Honorable Mary Wallop, second daughter of Lord Squint, D. C. F., K. Y. B., a tall pale girl with gold hair, slightly marred by the protruding teeth that were the mark of her direct descent from Oswald Scuinente, first baron who came over with William the Conqueror; time, late autumn; place, Vallombrosa; falling leaves strewing the brook, etc., etc. Yvonne (what was her other name?), to whose room he had climbed from balcony to balcony of a gawdy Venetian palace; time—he couldn't quite remember—probably in season. Nobody was in Venice at any other time of the year.

He had a head for detail, Mr. David Lacy. He began already to construct in his imagination the

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probable course of this present adventure. A nun, perfumed! This adventure resembled one of Casanova's. Yes, he could see already that it must be underlined in red.

“Purrr-rr-rr,” ran the motor, singing along beautifully. On either side of the ~~road~~ the marsh grass lay spangled with fireflies. The scent of syringa still clung to his companion, but with it there mingled another scent, more subtle, yet even more penetrating. What was it? Ah, mimosa, to be sure! The nun used mimosa perfume. Clever of her. None of these TNT perfumes called *l'air embaumé* or *l'air insupportable*. Mimosa . . . Mimosa. . . . Of course; he'd overlooked one red-letter affair . . . that one with the Princess Droscki Impermeable, at the Hotel Negresco.

“The carburetor sounds better now,” he observed presently.

“Yes,” said the nun.

It must be said that the all-conquering Mr. Lacy was not entirely at his ease. He had talked to many women. Carrie Nation would have appalled him no more than Ninon de l'Enclos; but here was a nun! What did one say to a nun? Only once before had he been reduced to such a condition of

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helplessness. It was an American girl; at least the old dowager at the Ritz told him so. He had seen her beside the paddock at Auteuil, the day Haricot came in fourth and cost him fifty thousand francs; a girl grave, beautiful, red-haired, calm among the painted courtesans and manikins at the race track. "American," Mrs. Murgatroyd had said, "from New England—stinking rich."

But what the devil was her name? Slowly there came over him once more the same feeling of mingled warmth and awe, the same sensation of being refreshed, of losing all sense of the cynical weariness which had enveloped him for so long. Vaguely the scent of mimosa was mingled with the memory.

Why, he thought, should he suddenly remember that American girl, seen but once, who had had the power of upsetting him? It was a long time ago that he had seen her and spoken to her for five minutes—more than two years—and yet there she was, stuck in his brain. By Jove! A girl like that! One might marry her and be satisfied for life. That would be an experience to be underlined three times in red.

All at once, moved by an overwhelming impulse he turned and said, "I say, Sister Dannemora——"

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“Connemara” she corrected him in a cool, level voice.

“I say—” But he did not continue. One glance at her was enough. The nun had outwitted him. At some time or other during the past ten minutes she had slipped from somewhere in the folds of her white robe a mask of white silk that now hid her face, all save the eyes, which regarded him with a roguish air out of all keeping with her shining garments. And her hair. It too lay hidden beneath the cowl. Why hadn’t he noticed that until this moment?

“I say,” he began again, “you can’t wear that thing—the mask, I mean. We’ll be in Greenwich in a moment or two, and the police will hold us up. They’ll take you for a bandit! We’ll be arrested!”

For a moment Sister Connemara hesitated. Then in a voice like a choir of innocent angels, she said, “I throw myself at your mercy, sir. I dare not show my face. There are reasons. I trust you to protect me.”

Again he turned to look at her, so sharply that the car veered suddenly and very nearly collided with a vegetable stand which stood before the gate of a roadside farmhouse.

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"We just missed the tomatoes," observed Sister Connemara. "What a smash they would have made—and me all in white too."

On the road before them the lights of Greenwich began to appear, little lozenges of light twinkling through the faint mist which had begun to drift up from the salt marshes.

The redoubtable Mr. Lacy grew sulky. He resolved not to speak to this sophisticated nun by his side. For a time he drove without paying any heed to her. She might have been a part of the motor itself, the speedometer, or the piston rod, for all he cared. Yet, after two or three minutes, he said, quite unwillingly, "But what am I going to do with you when I get to town? I can't turn you loose in the streets. You'd be arrested in that rig."

From behind the mask came the faintest gurgling sound, as if Sister Connemara were laughing at him. "Just like a man," she murmured, "putting all the blame on the woman."

Lacy swore. "My God!" he said, "are you saving me or am I saving you?"

"My Aunt Celimena," retorted the mimosa-scented mask, "says there is no more chivalry in the world. I've had two proposals tonight and I

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believe her. You would too if you had heard their language."

A nun having two proposals in one evening! A nun. . . . ! Lacy decided this adventure must be underscored twice in red. There had never been anything quite like it.

The villas were now whizzing past in a stream of neat lawns, well-trimmed privet hedges, porch swings, and canna beds.

"I have an apartment in town," he began helplessly. "On Park Avenue. It's closed, but I've kept a room open for myself. I might take you there and hide you until you got some other clothes."

"Oh, I couldn't do that," cooed Sister Connemara, "that would compromise me."

This time Lacy swore violently and not altogether under his breath. Then, remembering the white-robed figure beside him, he checked himself in time to hear a voice say sweetly, "I don't know what all those words mean."

And then into the midst of Lacy's fury came the sound which was an omen of the worst that could happen. Steadily from somewhere behind the big Isotta-Franchini there rose with increasing volume

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the chug-chug of a motorcycle. He turned fiercely to his companion.

“Now you see what you’ve done,” he muttered. “There’s a motorcop after us.”

“Blaming it on the woman again,” came the sweet voice.

He couldn’t increase his speed, for they were now in the heart of Greenwich. If they had been on an open country road. . . . chug. . . . chug . . . chug-chug! The fatal sound came near and nearer until David Lacy, swearing silently this time, drew up to the curb and the motorcycle came alongside. It was hopeless.

“What the hell d’you think this is?” began the policeman, balancing himself on the motorcycle. “A speedway?”

“I hadn’t thought much about it,” replied Lacy. “I had my mind on other things.” And he gave his companion what is known as a dirty look.

The motor had stopped in the shadow of a great elm, so that it was impossible to distinguish the face of himself or his companion. With the air of one accustomed to such episodes, he had switched off the tail light.

“It’ll cost you twenty-five—” began the cop.

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"Here," said Lacy, drawing his wallet from his pocket.

"None o' that stuff either," retorted the policeman. "Don't you read the papers? They've been digging up dirt on us."

The wallet slipped back into the pocket just as the policeman switched an electric torch full into the motor.

"Ah," he began, with an exasperating drawl. "What's this? A woman in a mask. . . . Some kind of dirty work. So that's it."

Now the glib and worldly Lacy had faced in his time many trying situations. For days he had held at bay a band of head hunters in wildest New Guinea; he had negotiated the escape of the notorious Baroness Simkovich, across the Russian border through the very teeth of the Bolsheviks into Finland; he had stabbed to death a gorilla with a table knife when the monster invaded his tent during a shooting expedition in the wild regions near Mount Hokmoji; he had. . . . All these things flashed through his mind, but none seemed the proper solution of this difficulty. There were no disguises at hand and no cutlery.

"I— I—" he began, stammering. The subtle

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frail scent of mimosa smote his nostrils. "I—mean to say. . . ." But he was unable to get any further.

Then the soft, insinuating voice of the nun beside him reached his ear. She had removed the mask and was now facing the full glare of the policeman's light, but her back was turned: he could not see her face.

"Don't stop us, officer," she was saying in a voice that would have wrung the heart of a stone idol. "We're on our way to see my sick aunt. I'm sure she can't stand much longer what she has been going through. It's—" Here her speech was interrupted by a heartrending sob. "We must get there. Why, Aunt Celimena has been more than a mother to me."

In the reflected glow the face of the policeman altered its expression slowly. It ran from anger, through surprise to bewilderment. Still Lacy could not see her face, yet from the effect upon the policeman he understood that it was no ordinary face. An ordinary face couldn't possibly have had such an effect.

"It's not a mask I'm wearing." Again she was interrupted, this time by a sneeze so violent and so realistic that Lacy was tempted to slap her regard-

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less of her dignified robes, well in the middle of the back. "It's not a mask I'm wearing," and again a sneeze. "It's a thing—a sort of thing to keep out the dust. I suffer so from hay fever."

The cop yielded, but he was cynical. "Well, it sounds fishy to me, but I guess it's all right. But look out for Hogan at the Portchester line. He won't let you off so easy."

Lacy started the motor, and when he turned again, the face of his companion was once more hidden by the mask. She was sneezing, delicately this time, with just the proper effect. The car moved off, leaving behind it in the shadow the policeman whose face made so good and yet so tantalizing a mirror.

"Where is this sick aunt?" growled Lacy.

There was a faint laugh. "Why, she's the one I'm running away from."

"We can't go on like this," he continued in the same gruff voice, "being stopped at every cross road. One of these cops will arrest me for abduction." At that moment they passed the tower of Pickwick Inn, and Lacy, noticing the clock, said, "It's ten minutes to eleven. We can just make the last ferry. We'll turn off here and go over to

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Long Island. I've a house not far from Glen Cove. You can change into some other clothes."

Before his companion was able to protest, the big car swung around the corner, turned into the main street, and swept with a catlike, insinuating purr beneath the railway bridge.

In the little harbor the tide was low, and the muggy, miasmic smell of the bare mud hung over everything. Somehow it was an ominous smell, hinting of stranded ships, of pirates, of wild adventure . . . the smell of salt marshes at low tide, of rotting ships. Through the gathering mists the tall masts of the fishing boats stood against the dull gray blue of the sky like black pencils. The car drove down, down, down along the cobblestone streets, until at length it turned into the ferry way. At the end stood the waiting boat, its gateway yawning black as the mouth of a sea monster. When at last Lacy turned to regard his companion, he found that she had gathered about her the blanket that lay in the back of the car. She was hidden now all ^{from} save the beautiful shapely head with the hair so tightly concealed, and the eyes so bright now with a sense of mystery and adventure. She still wore the mask.

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Lacy regarded her and thought to himself, "No, there has never been anything like this. And to happen in Connecticut of all places!"

To the grizzled gatekeeper Lacy muttered, "How long before you start?"

"Five minutes," the fellow replied.

Somehow Lacy felt nearer suddenly to this strange woman beside him. Perhaps it was the sense of their being bound together by the same peril, the same adventure.

From the depths of the ferry house he heard the grizzled gatekeeper spit suddenly and exclaim, "It's a great night for bootleggers. I reckon this fog'll thicken up steadily till morning." And then the same voice lifted to shout to the pilot high up on the ferry deck, "Don't be running any of 'em down tonight, Sam. Can't afford to waste good liquor on fishes."

Sister Connemara laughed softly. "If you knew from what you had saved me—"

It is impossible to know what sort of picture Lacy had of the world from which she had escaped. It must have been a strange one, and certainly it was different from the picture in the mind of his companion. She saw a ballroom filled with excited

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people, two lovers hunting desperately among the syringas and perennial borders, and through it all Aunt Celimena moving about, angry and composed, in a black ball gown trimmed in 1880 jet.

"I say," said her companion presently in a puzzled voice, "haven't we met somewhere—before you entered a nunnery?"



A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Louis Untermeyer", with a long, sweeping underline underneath the name.

CHAPTER IV

By ELSIE JANIS

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CHAPTER IV

IN the two hours following that brief, altogether unsatisfactory talk with her niece, Miss Celimena was guilty of forgetting several times the rigid code of hospitality in which she had been trained and staring openly and anxiously at the painted face of the big grandfather clock in the hall.

If she could have done it without being seen, it is not at all certain she would not also have gone so far as to push the hands forward, to lessen the sheer nervous torture of those dragging minutes until midnight.

This latest escapade of Connemara's was not only utter foolishness, but it made the girl and Miss Celimena herself seem undignified. It was unthinkable that a Moore of Moorelands should resort to such cheap buffoonery for the announcing of her engagement—which ought, properly, to be a serious, not to say ceremonious occasion. Thus, over and over, back and forth in the same track, like frightened and feebly indignant mice, ran the thoughts of Miss Celimena.

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And even oftener than she studied the clock, this much-harassed lady studied the faces of the two other people most concerned in Connemara's outrageous behavior.

It was easy to see that Saltonstall Adams had little liking for the sudden blaze of limelight in which he found himself. Salt, like Miss Celimena, had been brought up to see dignity weigh much more heavily in the scales than romance. Or perhaps his definition of what constituted romance differed from spoiled young Connemara's. At any rate, as any and everyone could see, he looked very stiff and disapproving indeed as he danced, correctly and dutifully, with one after another of Connemara's guests, gallantly trying to live up to what was expected of him, but—as only the discerning noticed—with a faintly wistful bewilderment underlying the disapproval, as if his rather slow brain had not yet entirely caught up with the meaning of what was happening to him.

Bingham Carrington, on the contrary, was carrying the awkward situation off with a high hand. Inwardly he resented it, if possible, even more bitterly than his rival, for Bing was an emotional youngster and very genuinely in love. But he

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held his handsome blond head well back, with his chin lifted a half inch or so more than usual, and had a drawled come-back for every innuendo of the over-curious.

Bing would have died rather than let his eyes follow Miss Celimena's to the slow-moving hands of the old clock, but all the same he knew at the precise instant she did when they pointed, after centuries had passed, to five minutes of twelve.

Whether the entire, queerly garbed assemblage had been watching the clock also, there are, of course, no means of knowing, but the fact remains that there was a sudden, concerted halt of the dancers, and—after a straggling diminuendo wail from the blaring saxophone, and an uncertain thump or two from the drums—the orchestra followed their example and fell into abrupt and motionless silence.

A hundred pairs of eyes were turned expectantly from one entrance of the ballroom to the other, in search of a slim, straight little figure in the white robes of a Dominican Sister, minus the veil and head covering, coming to end the evening's play with the all-important announcement.

Poppy Glenn in particular, seemed unusually

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nervous, twisting her pretty neck to crane inquisitively over first one plump bare shoulder and then the other in her efforts to keep both doors in sight at the same time.

A full minute ticked itself away laboriously, and the strain grew. There were stifled giggles here and there in the room, and an impatient tapping of high heels that had the restless, staccato tempo of castanets. The whole scene was like a play, unreal, effective, and conveying a sense of leading up to some carefully planned climax.

Then, suddenly, as if in response to his cue, in the right-hand doorway appeared the stately figure of Judson, Miss Celimena's white-headed butler, carrying a small tissue-paper package in his hands.

And with the eyes of the room upon him, straight up to Saltonstall Cabot Adams went Judson, as unhurried and matter-of-course as though about to announce that dinner was served, and laid the package in Salt's astonished hand.

"Miss Connemara told me early this evening I was to deliver it at midnight, sir," quoth Judson, and, his part played, departed discreetly.

Bing with his face as white as Saltonstall's was scarlet, held his chin high by sheer instinct of pride,

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for, like the other man, he was past conscious analysis of his actions.

Poppy, who happened to be beside Salt, leaned forward with impertinent assurance and read aloud the clear black handwriting of the package's superscription:

“SALTONSTALL CABOT ADAMS, Esq.

According to Agreement,

CONSTANCE MARY MOORE,

June 30th, 12 P. M.

“My gracious, but she's being legal and exact. Congratulations, Salt, old top! Now hurry and open it up!”

It is probable, so great was Miss Glenn's curiosity and eagerness, that if her suggestion had not been promptly acted upon by the successful suitor, she would have snatched the little package out of his hand and opened it then and there herself.

But, recovering somewhat from his astonishment at the girl's energetic command, Salt ripped off the silver ribbon tied about the small, limp white bundle, and rather cautiously began to unroll the paper covering.

A little gasp of released breaths went up about him as a long, silky *something*, sinuous as if actually

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alive, warmly red—no, auburn, excuse us, Connemara—with a surface sheen of gold where the light touched it, lay across his open palm, the discarded tissue-paper wrapping slipping to the floor at his feet. A thick, deliciously curling lock of Connemara's famous hair, clipped off by vandal shears, and then romantically and daintily tied up in tissue paper and silver ribbons and sent to her lover, for all the world like the heroines of picturesque but out-of-date days when Knighthood was in Flower.

And Connemara the most up-to-the-minute and rebellious of moderns too! Still, it undoubtedly was a dramatic touch and went rather well with the fantastic costumes of the audience.

They broke into a storm of applause that was almost hysterical in its relief at the ending of the strain. And Salt, carried out of his usual grave pomposity of manner by this proof of his triumph, forgot that he hated the limelight, and actually had made a stiff little speech before he could stop himself.

“Ladies and Gentlemen,” he said seriously—“Ladies and Gentlemen, it has been, very fittingly, left to me by Miss Connemara Moore to make the evening's anticipated and happy announcement.”

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After which he went on and made it, formally, correctly, as one who was at once a Saltonstall, a Cabot, and an Adams might be expected to do, and it was neither a bad enough nor good enough speech to be remembered ten minutes after he made it by anyone present, if it had not been for the unforeseen dénouement just before the next to the last sentence as he had it outlined in his mind.

Somebody's very muscular hand closed unexpectedly on Salt's arm, and spun him right about face with a suddenness that jarred his teeth together violently.

The voice of Bing Carrington, entirely shorn of its lazy Virginian drawl, fell in furious accents upon the close and startled air of the packed ball-room.

"How in thunder," it inquired with ominous restraint, "do you get that way? Didn't you take in the very plainly expressed agreement that if Connamara bobbed her hair it meant she was engaged to *me*?"

With a quick gesture he snatched the auburn lock from the other's hand, and held it aloft before all the eyes.

"*Well?*" demanded young Mr. Bingham Carrington.

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ton, his chin up at least an inch and a half as he faced the room with his challenge.

“Why—why—” It was Poppy Glenn, on the verge of hysterics from sheer excitement. “That *was* the agreement. Of course it was, Bing!”

Stunned silence—broken giggles—a circle of staring eyes—

“I,” said Bing, in his most magnificent manner, which could be very magnificent indeed when he had an occasion to rise to, “have the honor of announcing, for Miss Moore and myself, our engagement.” His eyes gleamed with reckless laughter that picked up answering smiles, warm and friendly, from those nearest him. “I’m waiting for congratulations, everybody, and it’ll take a darn lot of them to make up for what I went through when old Judson marched over and handed Salt that package,” he wound up in an ingenuously youthful outburst.

“Perhaps you can explain why, in that remarkable eventuality,” Salt asked icily, “Connemara sent the package to *me*?”

“To let you know you were out of it, of course,” Bing Carrington said, with easy assurance, still holding on to Connemara’s disputed curl. “And possibly, too, because she’s a generous, warm-hearted

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child who's sorry to hurt anyone, she sent it to you for a little keepsake to remember her by. Perfectly natural and simple thing to reason out for any one who understands Connie Moore." He shrugged, as if finished with the subject forever.

"What makes you think *all* her hair's been cut off?" Salt asked angrily.

Poppy broke into the discussion before the Southerner could answer. "She told me she had planned one last puzzle," she announced, "and that she'd come in and untangle it as soon as you'd given up."

They all looked expectantly at the doors again, but this time nothing happened except the sudden and solemn booming of the grandfather clock in the hall, sounding the first stroke of twelve. And though no one attempted to put it into words, they were all vaguely aware at the same instant of a queer little sense of finality, of the definite ending of something, and the beginning of something else, nobody knew just what, as the old clock continued to strike, slowly and matter-of-factly.

Elderly, withered little Mr. Brewster, Miss Celi-mena's lawyer, broke the silence the clock left.

"The announcement had to be made before twelve

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to be binding," he said in his thin, throaty voice. "Two announcements have been made, but both cannot, of course, hold. Miss Connemara had better stop the play now and come forward to tell us which one of them is true. Otherwise—" He held out his hands, and shook a disapproving gray head.

"Oh, she'll be here in a moment," Poppy assured him confidently. "And she's safe, either way, because one of the announcements *has* to be legal, hasn't it, Mr. Brewster? Let's just go on dancing. She'll get tired of teasing us if she sees we're not waiting for her."

So the orchestra was commanded to resume and everyone began to dance again, though in rather a half-hearted and desultory manner, with one eye on the door and the other uninterestedly on his partner.

An hour passed that was longer than all the rest of the evening before it put together, and still no Connemara with the promised untangling. At the end of that time Miss Celimena, her face very pale, beckoned both Saltonstall and Bing into a corner of the ballroom.

"Something's happened to her," she said, with a little catch in her voice. "She'd never carry a joke as far as this. Won't you—won't you both go out

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and look for her? Poppy and some of the girls and I will search the house."

Very soberly, their former hostility forgotten, the two went out, and Miss Celimena, her hand in Poppy's strong young arm, walked heavily toward the hall and the staircase at the end.

The grandfather clock which had already ticked off so much anxiety was just preparing to sound two when an anxious group of unsuccessful searchers met at the open front door, and mutely asked and answered the question that was in every eye, but which nobody wanted to put into words.

"Perhaps," suggested the withered little lawyer croakily, since there seemed to be no other offers of advice as to the next step—"perhaps we had better telephone the police at Greenwich."

Miss Celimena found her voice at that, and screamed: "*Police!* What for?"

"Why—eh—it's the customary thing, Miss Celimena, when a person is missing. Nothing to be alarmed about—quite the contrary, I assure you."

His eagerness to reassure was more alarming than openly expressed doubt. But Miss Celimena's long years of repression stood her in excellent stead now. She was up against something frightening and un-

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pleasant, but after that first terrified outcry, she had herself well in hand.

"The telephone is on that table behind you," she said quite calmly. "Will you call them, please, Mr. Brewster?"

She stood at his shoulder quiet and controlled while he talked over the wire for several minutes. At length he turned to her to ask, "They want to know how she was dressed when you last saw her?"

Then, indeed, for a flash, a quiver passed across the set face. It hurt Miss Celimena, even in the midst of her fears for Connemara's safety, to tell an outsider that a Moore had so completely forgotten family tradition and dignity as to disappear in the unfitting garb of a Dominican Sister at a fancy dress ball.

"Tell him," she gasped faintly, "it was a masquerade—nun's dress."

Brewster did so, describing the costume with painful conscientiousness. They saw him listen intently, while a look of dawning horror and incredulity slowly spread over his face. Then he said jerkily into the mouthpiece, "Thank you—yes, I'll tell her," and hung up the receiver.

"What is it?" Miss Celimena asked, with feverish

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eagerness. "He had some news; I saw it in your face."

"A traffic officer held up a car about eleven in Greenwich for speeding, and let them go when he found there was a nun in it, on her way, she told him, to an emergency case," the lawyer said slowly.

"My description and the officer's tallied exactly. Fortunately—or unfortunately, I'm not sure which—" he put one thin hand confusedly to his head—"the man took the license number. There was no one in the car but the nun and a well-dressed young man who was driving."

"Go on," Miss Celimena said hoarsely. "Can't they look up the number and find out whose car it was?"

Brewster hesitated. "They—did," he said; then, brusquely: "The number was that of a car reported stolen yesterday morning from New Haven."

A large, flowing, handwritten signature in black ink. The signature reads "Elsie Janis" in a cursive, elegant script. The "E" and "J" are particularly prominent, with the "E" having a long, sweeping loop.

CHAPTER V
By EDWARD STREETER

CHAPTER V

THE car stopped just outside the door of the engine room. A sickish, sweet smell of hot oil came billowing forth into the close passageway, driving before it the sharp, salt smell of seaweed and the faint odor of mimosa.

Sister Connemara stared straight ahead at the back of a huge truck which effectually corked out any breeze which might be travelling across the Sound.

"Haven't we"—insisted Lacy—"haven't we met somewhere before?"

"My orders," replied the demure creature beside him, "forbid the discussion of frivolous and trivial topics with men."

There was a warning toot from somewhere above. Engines clanked laboriously. After one or two preparatory shivers the boat moved slowly forward, leaving the ferry slip lights to waste their rays over a half acre of dancing foam.

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Connemara released her grip on the blanket. "At least we are out of Connecticut."

"Out of Connecticut into New York," replied her companion gloomily. "What's the difference? We can't spend our lives running out of one state into another without any idea what it's all about. It doesn't make any sense."

"It won't be necessary to make a profession out of it. This is not a permanent flight by any means. And," she added, touching his arm ever so slightly, "you've no idea how grateful I am to you for the loan of your wings."

A bare-chested oiler rose, Mephistophelean, from the red maw below the engine-room gratings. He stood gulping the air, one hand braced against the jamb of the door while with the other he mopped his face with a bunch of greasy waste.

Connemara observed him thoughtfully. "I should think men like that would make good athletes. They get so soaked in oil they must work easier than most people."

Lacy did not deign a reply. His mind was feverishly attempting to project itself into the future. The further it projected the more complex the situation seemed to become, until finally the

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whole affair broke off of its own weight and dropped into the abyss of chaos. The oiler stared at the pair for a moment and then disappeared. Nuns in foreign cars, driven by well-dressed men, were nothing in the life of one beneath whose oily chest were lodged the secrets of two states.

A man squeezed through the passage between the wall of the engine room and the truck in front of them. This in itself was not extraordinary, but he was by no means an ordinary man. Indeed, had you seen him selling tickets in front of a side show you must have immediately purchased admission on the theory that any exhibition of human misprints that could waste such material for the collection of dimes must indeed contain rare pi beneath its canvas.

A battered check cap with a veritable awning of a peak clung miraculously to the side of his head at an angle that made it difficult to say if it served as an ear muff or a head covering. Certain it was that it constituted the only head covering available, for the hemisphere of his cranium which had been left exposed to the night was as free from hair as a country hotel mattress. Under the light it had the sheen of an oyster shell. The simile ends there,

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however, for his skin, far from being mother of pearl in color, was pigmented with a California sunset so brilliantly crimson in hue that in the twilight of the passageway it appeared to glow like molten metal. He wore a suit checked in the proportions of a leaded glass window. The skirt of his coat ran a race with the lapels which it won just short of his knees. Where the lapels gave up they were brought together by a black cord neatly secured at either end by two enormous pearl buttons. A spear or a bayonet might have been used as a last for his shoes to which half a dozen pearl buttons still clung desperately as mute reminders of better days. From the corner of his mouth hung a cigar, the charred end of which had opened like the petals of a rare night flower.

This bizarre vision stepped clear of the rear end of the truck, carefully brushed the knees of his baggy trousers, and then, without straightening up, proceeded to examine the license plate of the Isotta. Apparently satisfied by his inspection, he drew from his inside pocket a torn piece of paper which he read by the aid of the light over the engine-room door.

Lacy and Sister Connemara watched his move-

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ments with interest. The night had already offered such proof of the abundance of its sensations that they had both arrived at a state of acceptance such as Alice must have reached when she rose from the Mad Hatter's tea party. Nor was their trust to be abused.

The check suit squeezed along the side of the Isotta. Without so much as a glance at the occupants of the front seat, it opened the rear door and calmly unbuttoned the floor carpet of the tonneau. A swift, searching hand was inserted under the loose corner—a long hand with thin, tapering fingers, quite out of keeping with its home torso, a hand that might sever a watch from its chain or a baby from its mother without the owners of either of these articles being in the least aware of their loss.

When it reappeared it gripped between an unlaundered thumb and forefinger a second torn bit of paper. This the owner of the hand compared with the piece which he had taken from his pocket. Then carefully and deliberately he placed the two torn ends together. The jagged ends fitted like neighboring bits of a picture puzzle.

The knuckles of Constance Mary's hand showed

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white from the tenseness of her grip on the side of the car. The soft material of her mask reflected her short, sharp breathing. The color had left Lacy's face. He stared at the fantastic stranger with the horrified glare of one who has just witnessed the execution of a ghastly and foul deed.

The performer, on the other hand, registered relief on every crimson feature. "I'm Pooch," he admitted with a bright smile, and then added, "Thank God," either in gratitude for his identity or for some unknown and extraneous reason. Without further introduction he climbed through the open door of the tonneau and sank heavily into the back seat.

Lacy glanced at Sister Connemara. Her gaze was fixed on him so intently that his own dropped before it and he focussed his attention on this second addition to his evening's entertainment.

"So you're Pooch?" he said finally, not so much because he doubted as from an uneasy feeling that the conversation must be maintained.

"In the flesh," boasted Mr. Pooch. "Cast your peepers over the passports."

He handed the two slips of paper to Lacy. Under

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the hooded dashboard light the man and the girl examined them curiously. They were two parts of a sheet torn from a pad of cheap, ruled writing paper. On either half was printed a number which corresponded with the license number of Lacy's car. On the reverse side of each half was written "5111st" and underneath this was drawn a crude anchor around which a snake had apparently retired for the night.

"Here's th' rest on it," said Mr. Pooch, and bending over the front seat he injected a hairy forearm into the tiny circle of light. On the inner side of the limb was neatly engraved a small blue anchor passionately embraced by a sea serpent.

"Guess y' can't object to that," said Mr. Pooch complacently.

Lacy looked from the two bits of paper to the white shrouded head beside his, back to the rear seat where a luminous glow indicated the unhandsome features of Mr. Pooch, along the shiny bonnet of the car to the tail light of the truck in front, and back to the papers. Through his mind for the second time that evening there passed memories of other red-letter days, and nights, of his life—doing the Human Fly across the front of a Venetian

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palace while the siren object of his Lloydian amours mocked him with Virginia tobacco rings from window to window; thrilling days in the souvenir belt of New Guinea, carving over-congenial gorillas in the privacy of his tent; a scientific experiment to prove the theory that one American is as good as six Frenchmen, conducted in an open-air laboratory off the wharves of Brest.

Until tonight he had considered these as adventures. Now he realized that they were not adventures but incidents—unicellular episodes after which one was assured of a warm bath and clean clothes.

Here, however, was a situation which began nowhere and ended in approximately the same position. Indeed, instead of ending, it seemed to accumulate bulk and impetus as a rolling stone dislodged from a Swiss mountainside will multiply in its course, thundering through great forests and erasing villages until, having changed the topography of a county, it ceases as unexpectedly as it began. Yes, this was his first adventure.

Another difference between this and any previous experience was that heretofore he had always played the principal rôle. Tonight his function appeared to be merely that of stage manager. As long

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as he furnished transportation to the troupe he was allowed to tag along, but no one thought of consulting his desires in the development of the plot. As a matter of fact, he did not know yet how many persons there were in the cast. The thought pleased him. He would carry on and, if the cast grew too large, he would abandon the Isotta and hire a sight-seeing bus somewhere.

A voice in his ear returned him to the Greenwich ferry. "Didje come right up from the works?"

"As fast as I could get here."

"Y' had us guessin'. We thought you might come on the other ferry. Some o' Swede's gang is up there watchin' of y'. If they missed you they was to beat it on back to the boat an' have her ready fer us, so it's all right either way," he added generously.

Connemara started. Since Pooch's appearance she had been groping blindly, frantically for some logical explanation to illogical events. Never for one moment, however, had she doubted the frank good looking man beside her with whom she had spent a lifetime in less than two hours. She would as soon have suspected Aunt Celimena of being a professional second-story worker. The finding of

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the papers in the car and the artistic identification of Mr. Pooch had been the work of some unseen force over which neither she nor her travelling companion had control.

Now for the first time a little devil of doubt hopped over the hood of the car and sat grinning at her through the windshield. Could it be that the "we-ness" of things was not so firmly established as she had supposed. A dawning consciousness that it might be rash to hop into the cars of strange men in the middle of the night sent its chill down her back.

There was a movement in the back seat, and Mr. Pooch's phosphorescent countenance glowed between them like a Chinese lantern.

"S-a-a-y, sister, I get y' now. That's good, that is! I ben tryin' t' get y' since I hopped in. I got y' now, though. I was only expectin' one, an' it trun me off a mile when I seen two on y', as th' fella says when he got th' D. T.'s. S-a-a-y, you're good, you are. I seen everythin' pulled, I guess, but I ain't never seen th' nun gag worked before. Say, this business ain't no profession no more. It's an art. But looka, Sister. Why th' mask? I hardly knowed you at foist. What's all the Ku

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Klux over y'r best friend? There ain't no nuns in Toickey."

Then spoke Sister Connemara words soft and assured which exploded in Lacy's ears like a giant cracker, "I put it on, Pooch, 'cause I thought I saw somebody I knew."

Great Heavens, was this girl connected in some way with that caricature of a hairless Mexican on the back seat? Or was he possibly going crazy? Had he hit a telegraph pole after leaving Stamford, and was he now lying broken in some ditch while his brain danced a crazy reel with death? That sounded like a movie title. Had someone slipped him a drink of bad Scotch?

Pooch glanced through the back window of the car. "S-o-o." He snapped his fingers in thoughtful imitation of castanets. "Guess we might's well give this ol' seagoin' hack the once-over before we beach. Good now's never." He climbed out and disappeared around the back of the car.

A blanket of silence fell over the front seat. The lights of Bayville were pricked out of the blackness ahead. In another ten minutes they would be committed to the hands of an unknown destiny, who might turn out to be a policeman. Lacy's heart

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was heavy with suspicion and disillusionment, but his old passion for adventure, handed down through the generations from some gentleman buccaneer in the queen's service, was flaming high. Without knowing where the dawn might find him, he cared less. Only one thing was clear and definite in the midst of all this uncertainty. He would look upon the face of this woman who dressed like a nun, spoke like an angel, scented herself like an April flower, and associated with the flotsam of dime museums.

Connemara on her side of the front seat was having her own troubles. Unwelcome, but ever-growing, distrust formed the motif, and a rapidly increasing panic played hide and seek around and through it. One good scream would break the spell and bring her back to the world of ordinary people who spoke and acted in expected ways. She opened her mouth and took a deep breath in preparation for a drum-rocking yell. Then she saw the headlines in the morning papers: "Popular débutante denounces joy riders. Season's bud disguised as nun declares companions thugs on Greenwich ferry."

No, no! That was too grotesque. She closed her mouth and let out her breath.

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The motor of the truck ahead backfired several times, filling the passage with a cloud of evil-smelling smoke. Chains clanked in the bow.

"There's a Pierce on the other side," observed Mr. Pooch, climbing in. "We'll be off foist, though. Rather have 'em behind us. If they folly along, I guess this baby c'n dust 'em." Wherewith he struck a match with his thumb, set fire to the exploded cigar, and proceeded to offer his contribution to the general atmosphere of carbon monoxide.

The cars were moving off. "Stick close behind that bambino," Pooch waved his incense burner at the truck ahead. "Our feller's waiting at the end of the dock. You're t' folly him along behind."

They were ~~creeping~~ driving along ~~the~~ off the boat, the powerful motor whirring with eagerness for the open road. Out of the darkness at the end of the short dock their headlights picked up the nose of a green Packard touring car. Pooch sprang from the back seat, ran ahead of the lumbering truck, and spoke to the driver of the green car. It pushed forward into the line, and Pooch stepped upon the running board of Lacy's car as it passed.

"Get 'round th' damn' ol' ark in front an' behind them guys I spoke to. They'll take us over th'

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quickest way. Step on her. Keep right on their tail." He stood up and surveyed the cars behind, then satisfied with the inspection, settled into the corner of the rear seat and set about relighting his faithful companion.

There were only a few cars ahead of them, and Lacy worked up quickly behind the green Packard. The moon was full. It was one of those rare nights which make June so popular for weddings and outdoor drinking. Ahead the road unwound in a gray, luminous band. Higher and higher rose the hum of the motors as the two cars shook off the ferry traffic and raced past the tented nomads of Bayville.

Pooch leaned forward. "Here is th' jack," he said. "I didn't want t' give it to you on th' ferry. Never c'n tell who's nosin' round. I want t' get shook of it, though. I'll give it you, sis. You c'n stockin' it fer th' boss here. He's workin' now. Count it. There's fifty grand there. Thank God, that's gone!"

A thick roll of bills bound with an elastic band was placed in Sister Connemara's hand as they lurched around a curve with the speedometer wavering around forty-five.

Mechanically she leaned forward to the dashboard

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light, removed the strap, and counted the money. Fifty brand new, fluttering thousand-dollar notes! Rolling them up, she hesitated a moment and then with sudden determination tucked them inside the voluminous folds of her nun's habit.

Pooch again: "That damn Pierce's comin' up. Drive up to the Packard an' I'll tell 'em t' take her out of second. That bunch ought to be hackin' for some funeral parlor."

The big Isotta leaped ahead with a warning croak—from the horn. Trees, fences, hedges, softly lit houses flashed past in crazy panorama. Round-ing a corner on the wrong side of the road, they left a Ford sedan stranded in the ditch. Gradually they drew up to the Packard. Pooch cupped his hands and shouted, but the wind tore his words away. The Packard driver seemed to understand, how-ever, for he increased his speed and took the lead once more.

Through the deserted streets of Glen Cove tore the two racing cars. A sleepy policeman leaning against the bank at the four corners roused him-self sufficiently to stagger to the curb and open his mouth several times after the retreating tail lights. On past the Engineers, through Sea Cliff and up

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the winding hill flanking Roslyn Harbor. They were approaching Roslyn.

At the four corners where the North Hempstead turnpike joins the Sea Cliff road there was a right-angled turn. Both cars threw on all their brakes and skidded into the main street. Down the hill and through the town they tore, to the delight of the few village story-tellers assembled in front of the local Greek's Around the Corner. Behind them slid a Pierce runabout, its mudguard leaving a scar on the dummy cop as it swayed past. The patrons of the local Greek cheered.

At the clock tower the Packard swung suddenly to the left into the Mineola road. Whether Lacy could not make the turn or whether he did not want to was not clear. The Isotta wavered for a fraction of a second and then went thundering up the Roslyn hill toward New York. The driver of a motor bus coming in the opposite direction stopped and, leaning from his seat, started to express his opinion of drivers who did not dim their lights. He stopped in the middle of a withering line and gazed open-mouthed at the spark-spitting black streak that swept up the long grade as if it did not exist. As he started again the lights of the following Pierce

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broke full in his eyes. Throwing his wheel to the right, he buried the nose of the bus in the clay bank beside the road. Two sleepy passengers picked themselves off the floor, promising to have him discharged for reckless driving.

Faster and faster, they shot on toward Manhasset. Connemara clutched the side of the car with one hand and with the other pressed hard against her cowl. Two cars appeared going in opposite directions half a mile ahead. An instant later the Isotta was between them. The lurching tonneau touched the small sedan on its right. A sound resulted as of someone striking a dishpan with his knuckles. The sedan partly overturned and came to rest against a post.

A shot sounded from the back seat. Lacy's first thought was for his tires. He glanced back. Pooch had knocked out the back window and was kneeling on the seat, a revolver pointed through the opening.

There was another report, but this time from the front of the car. The right front tire went careening along the ditch beside them. The hood leaped into the air. Lacy jammed on the brakes, but it was too late. Like a creature in its death throes, the

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car staggered back and forth across the road twice. There was a ripping of steel through wood.

The Pierce passed them, stopped fifty yards down the road, then backed to the wreck. Two men with drawn revolvers got out.

Ed Strulin

CHAPTER VI
By MEADE MINNIGERODE

CHAPTER VI

A DISCOURAGING odor—one of those odors which disengage themselves from catastrophes—or rather, a concatenation of viciously incompatible odors—arose into the tenuous June night air like a flight of very bad angels. Showers of stars, so it seemed momentarily to Connemara, sprinkled the vault of heaven with pyrotechnic splendor. There was a hissing and a sputtering, a clanking and crunching, and above the uproar the steady booming of enraged profanity. It proceeded from the overturned sedan, a man's voice complaining, bitterly and monotonously, like an intermittent fog-horn.

“What the blazes did you go and do that for?” he kept inquiring, invisibly persistent.

“I think there's been an accident!” Connemara was moved to explain, but the man was not satisfied

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—nor, when she came to view the situation more critically, was Connemara.

And what an accident! A sedan overturned in one ditch, imprisoning a very angry gentleman who would probably have a devil of a time explaining matters afterward to his wife. The Isotta plastered like a mashed turnip against a telegraph pole in the other ditch, after having bounced Mr. Pooch out into the road on one side and Connemara's young man on the other, leaving Connemara herself sitting somewhat incongruously on the spokes of the right front wheel, spinning slowly around like a spent roulette ball just before it flips into the wrong compartment. And just in front the Pierce, from whose depths had come those two personages impending in the shadows with drawn revolvers, who appeared to be waiting for the whites of somebody's eyes!

Connemara made herself aware of these details in one comprehensive glance. At the same time, while she still revolved physically on her spinning wheel, she likewise did so mentally around the more saliently depressing social aspects of her present situation.

And what a situation! Midnight or thereabouts.

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Somewhere between Manhasset Bay and Hempstead Harbor : Connemara Moore in deceptive fancy dress, planted in a brokendown—not to say up—car in the company of two strangers, obviously of nefarious calling, bent on criminal endeavor. For there could be no doubt about it; Mr. Pooch, of course,—with his fifty thousand dollars which Connemara could hear crackling in one of the more intimate recesses of her costume—but also Mr. Whatever-his-name-was. A nice young man too. A little slow on the uptake, perhaps, although he had picked her up fast enough, Connemara was forced to admit. Yes, a nice young man—a little less than Salt and more than Bing, which was probably just about the right combination—but a crook, a crook, Connemara reminded herself. A fifty-thousand-dollar crook!

“I wish he hadn’t been a crook, I really do,” Connemara remarked sadly to herself. She certainly had no intention of associating herself with any bright young stranger who appeared to be headed for Atlanta or some other federal resort, unless he were dead back there in the road, which seemed not unlikely.

Where was everybody, anyway?

Connemara’s wheel came to a stop—it could only

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have been a few seconds since the crash—and Connemara found herself staring at the two individuals from the Pierce who had now advanced much closer.

“What goes on, Ku Klux?” one of them inquired.

A flashlight blinked in her face, blinding her, and at the same moment there was the crack of a revolver over her shoulder. Connemara felt a hand on her arm, found herself jerked backward onto the road, heard the inimitable accents of Mr. Pooch in her ear, “You come with me, kid—over the speckled sands!”

“But Mr.—Mr.—your friend!” Connemara protested, and wondered why.

“To hell with him!” Mr. Pooch announced, dragging her after him into the shadows. “He’ll have to look out for himself with them highjackers. Guess perhaps he’s croaked, anyway!”

Yes, perhaps so. Anyway, there was nothing to be done now but follow Mr. Pooch, much as a tender follows its engine. As for the nice young man—let him go, the fifty-thousand-dollar crook.

Which was exactly what David Lacy was saying to himself from his place of precarious concealment in the ditch in which he was picking odds and ends out of his hair. She was a nice girl—more than that,

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mysterious, charming, alluring: David Lacy allowed himself the world, intriguing.

But she was a crook—no question about it, a friend of that poisonous Pooch, who had recognized her and given her the money. Too much money. It was all too bad—too damn bad—but let her go, the fifty-thousand-dollar crook.

“Good riddance,” David Lacy decided under his breath. “You—you Whited Sepulcher.”

In spite of which he found himself wriggling along the ditch, in the direction taken by Mr. Pooch and that smooth-tongued young deception. . . .

For perhaps the first time in her vivid young life, things were happening almost too fast for Connemara. She was able, usually, to pluck at least the tail feathers, as it were, from any passing event, but on this occasion the needle of Connemara’s mental recording apparatus was seismic in its evolutions upon the chart of her perceptions. She was being dragged along madly through the dark by the snorting Mr. Pooch. Behind her on the road a commotion of voices and revolver shots bespoke an increasing tumult, in the midst of which the gentleman in the overturned sedan could still be heard, plaintively abusive.

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"What you firing at *me* for?" he kept inquiring.
"What do you think I am, a shooting gallery?"

Aside from that, Connemara found herself just a breath or two behind the pageant of human events rocketing past her—in fact, she found herself entirely out of breath, in her enforced attempt to keep pace with the fugitive Pooch, whose grasp upon her arm had not for a moment, needless to say, relaxed. Mr. Pooch was steaming across open fields, hurling himself through hedges, floundering over ditches, decanting himself on the further side of only too frequently recurring fences, and wherever Mr. Pooch went, Connemara was obliged to follow, a reluctant, gasping, willy-nilly tail to his comet, much encumbered by her nun's attire.

At last there was a sandy slope, the sudden level of a deserted beach, a glimmer of water at sight of which Mr. Pooch went into reverse. Connemara sat down at once.

"Wh-wh-wh—?" she remarked, and Mr. Pooch laughed.

"All in, ain't you, kid?" he grinned at her. "Pretty light on my feet for a heavy guy, I am. No time to lose back there; had to make our get-away."

"You n-needn't have b-bothered about me," Con-

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nemara assured him, and Mr. Pooch roared with mirth.

"Zat so?" he chuckled. "Say, kid, you're a hot one. Think I'd leave you behind with all that dough for them highjackers to get their hooks on? Now everything's going to be fine—you just stick with me and you'll wear diamonds!"

With this dazzling prospect in view, Connemara arose to her protesting feet, for the good and simple reason that Mr. Pooch had begun to move forward again—his hand, if anything, firmer upon her arm—prospecting along the beach. A few hundred yards away they came to a dinghy, a black dinghy with a white bottom, fast in the sand. Mr. Pooch shoved the boat clear with one hand and turned to Connemara.

"In you get," he commanded, "and sit in the stern—that's the square end—where I can see you, my goil!"

Connemara sat in the stern, and Mr. Pooch climbed in after her and possessed himself of the oars.

"Now we'll look for this baby's mother," he remarked and began to row, sloppily but not without results, for soon a darker shadow proclaimed a boat

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at anchor in the deeper water—a small power yacht, black with a white bottom showing when she rose on her line.

“Ain’t no one aboard,” Mr. Pooch observed, and let the dinghy bump.

But Mr. Pooch was wrong. There *was* someone aboard, who manifested himself from the tenebrous cock-pit in the form of a genial voice heavily freighted with Scotch—both linguistically and liquidly speaking.

“Hooray!” said the voice, somewhat unexpectedly.

“Hooray yourself,” Mr. Pooch replied. “What time is it?”

“ ‘Snine bells,’ the voice assured him. “Nine bells, daylight-savin’ time. Come richt aboard and have ‘smore coffee?”

“We’ll do that little thing,” Mr. Pooch chuckled, and helped Connemara up the side, much as a policeman helps a prisoner into the van.

The voice in the cockpit revealed itself as a little man in a white-visored cap, grinning delightedly from ear to ear. He was, it was evident, fried, blotto, ossified, in short drunk, as only a Scotch-man can be. When he switched on the cabin light he developed freckles, blue eyes, an aggressive chin

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under humorous, mobile lips, and hair as red as Connemara's.

"'Sricht," he beamed at her. "Dressed in white—'sproper rig for yachtin'. Have 'smore coffee?"

"I—I—" Connemara was at what is known technically as a loss. More coffee! She had not had *any* coffee for hours—or was it weeks?

"Oh, aye—have 'smore coffee," White Cap urged her, "nsist on it."

"How about gas?" Mr. Pooch inquired, almost casually. "Got any gas?"

"Gas?" the little man laughed. "A' the gas in the world—gas, water, onions, marmalade—got everything. 'Sgo cruising? Tak ye anywhere ye say."

"We might go for a spin," Mr. Pooch seemed to deliberate. "Go ahead, Sandy; start her up."

"Dinna call me Sandy," White Cap objected. "'Sdang'rous. Call me Angus McTish—a' friends here, see?"

"All right, McTish, old scout, hop to it!" Mr. Pooch waved him forward. Coffee seemed to be forgotten.

Mr. Pooch stood in the cabin, smiling to himself, and Connemara sat down in a corner of the cockpit.

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Power yachts—in fact, all forms of marine endeavor—were a mystery to Connemara, and this boat in particular seemed more mysterious than most, surely. At least Connemara did not suppose it customary for strangers to come aboard private yachts in the middle of the night and be greeted by intoxicated little red-headed men with offers of nonexistent coffee, onions, and marmalade. But Connemara was tired, desperately tired, and so she sat, staring vacantly at some sort of document under the cabin lamp setting forth that one David Lacy was owner of the power boat *Bloody Nuisance* of New York. Soon there was a sound of machinery at its deadly work—a clanking up forward seemed to be an anchor coming up. At any rate, in a few seconds, the boat was moving—swiftly, silently, invisibly, mysteriously through the night.

For perhaps the first time in her life, Connemara began to feel a little bit frightened. Desperate measures flashed through her mind. Should she jump overboard and take her chances swimming back to land? Connemara looked at the black water and shivered negatively. Should she climb surreptitiously into the little black boat trailing astern and cast herself adrift, with a pair of, to her, meaning-

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less implements called oars as sole companions? Once again Connemara looked at the black water in tremulous negation. In her present dismay, not to say quandary, Connemara's soul craved company, however nefarious in character.

She left her place in the cockpit, therefore, and climbed onto the bridge, where Mr. Pooch was chewing a cigar at Angus McTish's elbow. Up ahead a light—Execution Rock, so Mr. Pooch announced—pierced the darkness. Astern, but very faintly, came the throb of a distant motor boat, concerning which Mr. Pooch made no announcement, since he had not yet noticed it; just as he had not become aware of the fact—unknown also to Connemara, though possibly not to Mr. McTish, who happened to be standing with his foot on a button in the deck—that the *Bloody Nuisance*'s electric anchor light was still lit—lit, and flashing intermittently in a manner far too methodical to be accidental.

“Long—short—short—long. . . .” Even Connemara, who was not versed in such matters, might well have guessed it to be a message, had she been able to see it.

And then a sudden and most alarming racket made itself manifest in the bowels of the ship.

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"Whas samatter?" Mr. Pooch inquired.

"'Snothing, 'snothing," McTish assured him.
"Fix 'tno time."

He slung himself down into the engine room, and for a few moments they could hear him below, clanking under their feet. Then he reappeared, with a spanner in one hand and a broad grin on his freckled countenance.

"'Snumber four cylinder," he informed them.
"'Sdead as a door nail. 'Sdeader. Oh, aye—far deader."

"Well, don't stand there gassing about it," Mr. Pooch rebuked him. "Can't you fix it?"

"Sure." McTish beamed. "Fix anything."

He lifted the engine hatch in the deck and fetched the exposed cylinder tops a terrific crack with the spanner.

"Hey!" Mr. Pooch exclaimed. "What the hell you doing?"

"Soakem!" McTish insisted. "Something wrang wi' th' engine? Always hit it a crack wi' a spanner first—'sonly way to fixem!"

McTish was obviously still extremely intoxicated—and yet the certainty swept over Connemara at that moment that Mr. McTish was actually as sober

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as a new-born clam and that he had been so from the first. Connemara could not have told why, but she was suddenly sure of this, just as she was positive that something desperate was about to happen.

It did, at once. Mr. McTish raised his hand for another crack at the cylinder top, and Mr. Pooch lunged forward.

"Cut that out, you bum!" he roared. "Tryin' to bust the spark plugs——"

While the words were still in the air the bridge became a tumult of arms, legs, faces, splinters, and profanity. The *Bloody Nuisance*, left to herself, behaved like one and rolled broadside on to the nearest sea. Connemara, holding on to a rod of some kind, saw that the two men were gripped in each other's arms. Mr. Pooch was on top of Mr. McTish, wrestling for the spanner and beating him with his other fist, while Mr. McTish seemed to be biting Mr. Pooch when and wherever occasion offered. But it was inevitable that Mr. Pooch should triumph, since he had all the advantages of weight and position on his side. And it was not long—although it seemed an eternity to Connemara—before Mr. Pooch had slung Mr. McTish into the fore-

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castle and slammed and padlocked the hatch on top of him.

"The bum!" Mr. Pooch panted. "Tryin' to wreck the engine. . . . My Gawd!"

Mr. Pooch had just caught that staccato exhaust of a power boat somewhere astern, a sound that drew steadily nearer as he listened, and which evidently signified dire contingencies to his mind, for he jumped all the way down the companionway into the cabin.

"Why—wh—?" Connemara ventured.

"Revenners!" Mr. Pooch flung at her over his shoulder. "Make it snappy, kid!"

"Snappy?"

"Sure—time to fly this floating coop!"

Mr. Pooch was already in the cockpit, hauling in the painter. He turned for an instant to look at Connemara, standing in the light from the cabin into which she followed him—and all at once his expression changed to one of sinister intensity.

"What the hell kind of game is this?" he demanded finally.

"What do you mean?" asked Connemara. "It's no game to me, I assure you."

"Don't get gay with me," Mr. Pooch snapped.

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“Didn’t get a good look at you before in that rig—
you ain’t Sweetie.”

“No, I certainly am *not*,” Connemara admitted.
“I—I think there’s been some mix-up——”

“Mix-up! And you putting it over on me!” Mr. Pooch exclaimed furiously. Then suddenly he was towering above her. “Come across with that dough!” he commanded.

His right hand was raised—with his left he reached for Connemara’s throat.

“McTish! McTish!” She just had time to shriek as Mr. Pooch’s fingers closed around her windpipe.

Meade Minnigerode.

CHAPTER VII

By DOROTHY PARKER

CHAPTER VII

MR. DAVID LACY, of New York, Paris, London, Venice, Petrograd, Monte Carlo, Palm Beach, and sometimes w and y, was not in the full enjoyment of that pool-like placidity of mind which usually characterized him. Indeed, he was aware of a distinct and curiously unpleasant sensation of mental unrest. There were ladies, in various sections of the world, who would have been ingenuously delighted by the news of this condition. In vain had they tried, individually, to bring him to it.

In the first place—and in most of the other places—there were his thoughts on Sister Connemara.

“Sister!” he said bitterly to himself as he stumbled along the ditch in what he gathered to be her wake. “Swell Sister she is.”

The comment pleased him, so low was his mental state. He repeated it, though inaudibly, several times. He even went into the matter on a larger scale, and thought, grimly, that she was never go-

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ing to have any chance at the old but ever popular rôle of being a sister to him. But he ran right on, along the ditch.

It now seemed to Mr. Lacy that, from the first moment of their meeting, he had grasped that Connemara was no real nun. He felt that he deserved a good, heaping measure of credit for his discernment.

"Thought she fooled me, did she?" he asked himself. He felt it would be not at all unpleasing to explain to the lady, in somewhat full detail, how strikingly little had been his belief in her vocation.

Now, of course, to have a young and low-voiced lady, disturbingly fragrant of mimosa, turn out not to be a nun at all is one thing. It opens up a wide field, gives birth to a series of pleasant plans for the future, and induces a healthy glow of anticipation. But, shortly after this discovery, to become a firm believer in the theory that the same young lady is one of the principal figures in a band of desperadoes, is distinctly something else again. Perhaps she was the Master Mind of the gang; possibly she had worked up to her present fifty-thousand-dollar job by way of a long apprenticeship in holding up cigar stores; maybe her photograph had been displayed

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in the papers as one of the mighty sisterhood of bobbed-hair bandits. It was a good thing, Mr. Lacy explained to himself, that he had found her out in time. There's no use trying to do anything for those people; they simply drop right back into their old ways again. The best thing to do is leave them alone; sooner or later they are bound to get theirs.

Yet he ran on along the ditch.

And then there was his car, tossed aside like a withered violet in the dust of the road behind him. It would require an experienced worker in mosaic ever to put it together again. The thought further depressed Mr. Lacy. It was not that he did not know where his next Isotta was coming from. It was not the money so much as the principle of the thing. Aside from a justifiable pride in the manner in which the car had come to be his, David had a deep fondness for it. He grieved for the sudden breaking-off of a beautiful relationship.

Still David ran on, into the darkness that had swallowed Connemara and Pooch so greedily. He loved the outdoors and couldn't get on without his exercise, yet the thing was beginning to pall. The sky had clouded thickly; the trees, whispering darkly together like old wives in a sick room, tossed their

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boughs and showed the under sides of their leaves. Winds sprang up, it seemed to David, from all directions, and not far off, thunder growled savagely. In his ears sounded the complaining of troubled waters. That must be the Sound, somewhere ahead. Well —perhaps the steeplechase would end there.

From behind him, hoarse shoutings punctuated his journey. Backward glances showed him a flashlight, careening like a drunken firefly, as its bearer stumbled along the ditch. The mysterious strangers from the Pierce were evidently going right on through with the thing. Their words were indistinguishable, but their tones indicated that they were calling upon David to stop. Yet, though well brought up, he paid not the slightest attention to the remarks that they addressed to him.

There was a report, from behind him, and something whistled shrilly entirely too close to his ear for any real comfort.

“The party,” murmured David, “is getting rough.”

And so was the ditch. David, quickening his speed, came suddenly into close personal contact with the stump of a tree that had apparently died in agony. Simultaneously injuring his shin and his self-re-

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spect, he went headlong among its twisted roofs, rolled from them, over and over in the slippery dead leaves of the ditch. With but a few brief words of hasty criticism of the dead tree, David picked himself up, found a footing, and started again on his travels. Again there was a report, decidedly closer this time. Again the screeching whistle troubled his ear.

"Hey, stop, will ya?" bellowed the voice back of him. It added a few words having to do with its owner's wishes for David's future.

"Well," David told himself, "we might as well get this over with." And he stopped and turned to face his pursuers, wearing an expression of courteous surprise.

They came up to him, the first one, who carried the flashlight, swearing glibly but without inspiration. The light revealed him as a heavy, dark man, with more than his legitimate quota of unshaven jaw. He wore badly assembled garments, and affected a lavishly plaided cap. Of the second figure, David could distinguish nothing more personal than that it was considerably shorter than the first.

David watched the light glint along the shining surface of the first man's revolver. The evening's

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events had taken on the quality of a prolonged dream. He had the curious lack of amazement with which one meets all the outrageous new occurrences of a nightmare.

"Doubtless," he mused, "this stout lad will turn out to be O'Malley of the Royal Mounted."

"Hey, what's the idea, sprinting like that?" demanded the big man. "Didn't you hear me tell you to stop?"

"I could hear the tune, but I couldn't quite catch the words," said David. He smiled politely.

"Yeah? Well, I'll words you, if you try getting new around here," replied the big man, who was evidently possessed of no mean wit. "Come on now —stick 'em up."

"Anything to make you happy," agreed David. "That's all I live for, really." He raised his hands above his head obligingly.

"That's better," the big man said. The revolver, in his admirably steady hand, pointed at David's chest. He made a backward gesture of his head toward his companion. "All right, Sweetie—go on through him."

"Sweetie!" said David. "Isn't it nice you boys get on so well together! That's what I like to see."

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The shorter figure came into the circle of light. David's first thought was that never had he seen worse-fitting clothes.

From somewhere within the depths of a flapping sleeve a thin, small hand shot out. David looked at it attentively, then closely scanned its owner's countenance. Between the cap and the upturned coat collar was the powdered, rouged face of a rather pretty girl—scarcely the daughter of a hundred earls, but still a rather pretty girl.

“Is there no line of business,” David asked himself, “that is safe from the inroads of women, these days?”

He shook his head at her, more in sorrow than in anger.

“Oh, Sweetie,” he said, in grieved tones, “aren't you ashamed of yourself, dressing up in Brother's clothes? Will you never outgrow your tomboy ways?”

“Aw, shut your face,” replied the laconic Sweetie. With deft and experienced fingers she searched him thoroughly, while he regarded the process with deep interest.

“Not on him, Doc,” she reported to her companion, finally.

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"I could have told you that, Sweetie, if you had only asked me in a nice way," said David. "Look at all the trouble you and your boy friend had to go to, just because of your impetuous ways."

"The girl must 'a' got it," the big man said. He approached David menacingly, "Where the hell did she go to?"

"That," said David, "is just what I was looking into when you interrupted me."

"One more of those cracks, and you're going to get a bust in the nose, see?" prophesied the big man.

"That's that wicked temper again," said David sadly. "You must try to remember that your heart is God's little garden."

With a bellow the big man lunged at him. But the girl, with a bored air, pulled him back.

"Oh, can that," she said wearily. "They must have gone off in a boat, Doc, like you said. Swede had the right dope on that bird, Pooch, after all. Me, I always did think he was crooked."

"Yeah? Well, we can fix that up, all right, all right," said the big man. "Come on, Sweetie—we'll get 'em. We got a pretty good notion which way they'll be headin'. What'll I do with him—" he indicated the attentive David with a movement of

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his head—"crack him on the head and leave him lay here?"

Sweetie considered a moment. "Oh, drag him along," she said. "He can help with the engine. I'm rotten at that stuff."

The big man approached David. "Go on, you," he ordered. "Try anything fancy, and it'll be your last official act, see? And keep 'em up."

The girl, with the flashlight, led the way along the ditch. Then came the obliging David, his hands airily above his head, the end of Doc's revolver nuzzling his back. At his heels was Doc, breathing heavily, and whole heartedly cursing various roots and stones and twigs.

"Couldn't we have a song?" suggested David. "It's always easier to march with music. What do you know, Sweetie?"

"Think you're funny don't you?" growled the big man.

"No," said David, with perfect truth.

"Well, then shut up."

"What would he have said if I'd said yes?" David wondered. But he remained silent. He gathered that they were on their way to find Connemara, and he felt it best to stay quietly along with them.

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Doubtless they could find her far more easily than he. They appeared to know her ways. Probably they all traveled in the same set.

The ditch dwindled away, gave place to a stretch of sharp stiff grass, then to an expanse of gray, cold, unpleasantly flabby sand. Beyond it the black water tossed peevishly. Lightning cut viciously across the wild sky, and with a roar and a rush the storm broke. There was no preliminary patter of infrequent drops; sheets of water dropped abruptly from above. The little procession toiling along the soggy sands was drenched immediately.

Suddenly the girl uttered an exclamation of relief. The last lightning flash revealed a tiny, ancient pier, to which was tied a little open motor-boat—apparently one of the first ever made.

“This is us, Doc,” commented Sweetie. “I knew it was right along here.”

“Well, it’s about time,” was Doc’s remark. It appeared to David to mean singularly little. He feared that the big man was one who spoke merely for the pleasure of the exercise.

The procession veered sharply, and made toward the boat. The girl got in it, and took the cover from the rusty engine.

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"Get in, you," the big man ordered David. His voice breaking to a whine, he turned imploringly to the girl.

"Aw, say, Sweetie, why don't I just busy him now and leave him here?" he asked.

"Oh, let him alone," replied the girl. "He'll do his stuff if the engine dies on us. We can flop him overboard if he tries any stunts."

"Bless your little soft heart, Sweetie," murmured David. He got into the boat and sat beside her. Doc untied the rope and followed them.

The little boat tossed and lurched on the growling water as the big man wrestled with its motor. David noticed, by a flare of lightning, that the craft's name was painted, in well-worn letters, across its stern. There displayed were the words *Idle Hour*.

"What an understatement," thought David.

The big man paused, raised his head to the raging heavens, and told God all about the stubbornness of the little engine. In the middle of his remarks the girl yawned. Having concluded, he addressed himself again to his work, gave a mighty wrench, and the motor started, with a succession of plaintive chugs. He took the wheel, and tossed his revolver to Sweetie.

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"Keep it on him," he said.

"I'll do that," promised Sweetie grimly. She turned the revolver on David.

He smiled tenderly at her. "I knew you'd do it for me," he said softly.

The little boat rolled crazily through the waves. The big man seemed to be taking a well-known course, for he steered purposefully, guiding himself by the rays of the flashlight. They toiled on in silence, soaked and tempest-tossed.

Abruptly the engine gave a petulant sigh and ceased functioning. Doc used language, then resorted to manual labor. In vain he pulled and oiled and wrenched. The *Idle Hour* tossed miserably, going as the waves took it.

"Hey, you," the big man growled at David. "What do you know about engines?"

"All," said David modestly. He bent beside Doc, and together they strove to make the aged engine listen to reason.

Across the water came the throbbing of a powerful motor and the swish of waves severed neatly by a sharp bow. Sweetie caught Doc's sleeve.

"Just a minute, there, feller," she said.

The big man raised his head and listened. Cau-

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tiously he used his flashlight, as the sounds drew nearer. Crossing their path was a big black motor boat, long and flowing of line. David sat up sharply, his hands gripping the edge of the seat.

From the larger boat came a woman's voice, high and shrill with terror.

"McTish!" it soared desperately, "McTish!"

David leaped to his feet in the wildly rocking boat.

"McTish!" he roared across the angry water.

As he called the girl had sprung up on the seat behind him. Her arm came swiftly down; there was a curious dull sound, as the revolver butt met his head.

Slowly and not ungracefully Mr. David Lacy crumpled up in a heap in the bottom of the boat.

Dorothy Parker.

CHAPTER VIII

By H. C. WITWER

CHAPTER VIII

IN the same instant that the fear-stricken Connemara screamed wildly for McTish, with the prehensile fingers of Mr. Pooch pawing at her throat, the utter absurdity of her appeal struck her. The idea of the little, flame-haired, candidly drunk Scotchman in the rôle of knight errant would have changed her shriek of fear to one of mirth—under other circumstances. Just now, however, Connemara's sense of humor was conspicuous by its absence! A panicky terror gripped her, mingled with amazement. Where was the owner of the familiar voice that had just echoed her frenzied scream "*McTish!*" across the water? Who was——?

But Mr. Pooch gave Connemara no time for conjecture. This gentleman of the new school was all business! One hand almost encircling her quivering throat, he clenched the other and drew it back ominously.

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"Gimme that fifty grand or I'll bump you off!" he yelled. "C'mon—make it snappy!"

Connemara gulped and moved her neck painfully in Mr. Pooch's iron grasp. With frantic glances she signaled her captor that speech was practically an impossible feat under his restraining influence. Slowly and cautiously Mr. Pooch relaxed his grip, like a fisherman playing his victim by the feel of the reel. Connemara gingerly rubbed her aching neck and glared at him indignantly.

"You are frightfully rude!" she said haughtily. "And I do not desire your company further. Put me ashore at once!"

For a moment Mr. Pooch eyed her almost incredulously. He actually looked abashed and retreated a step, and Connemara had a wild hope that her sudden assumption of an imperious manner might be effective where her shrinking fear had failed. At least it might allow her to temporize with her assailant. She continued to regard him fixedly, in a desperate imitation of icy anger, but Mr. Pooch quickly dashed her brief optimism.

"Put you ashore, hey?" he chuckled sneeringly, again advancing toward her. "Where d'ye get that stuff? As long as y' don't 'preciate me *askin'* for

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that sugar in a nice way, I'm gonna *take* it off ya'!"

A lurch of the yacht enabled Connemara partly to evade his vicious lunge at her arm, and as she sprang away there was a sound of ripping cloth. Mr. Pooch sprawled back perilously close to the low rail, mouthing strange oaths and tightly clutching one sleeve of her bedraggled nun's robe. Connemara stared wildly up at the bridge, where she now, to her amazement, discerned McTish, white cap cocked rakishly over one eye, calmly surveying the scene below with the detached air of a spectator at a particularly boring performance. He might have been a hod carrier at a Greek drama; or Noah viewing Niagara Falls. And not many moments before she had seen the red-headed Mr. McTish most thoroughly slammed and padlocked in the forecastle. Mr. Pooch regarded the sleeve in his hand with a baleful eye, hurled it overboard, and grimly resumed the attack.

"Help! Help!" wailed Connemara, ducking and dodging the grunting Pooch in the narrow space of the cock-pit. The waves swishing callously against the yacht's sides seemed to mock her.

"Where d'ye think y're, kid—in Times Square?" chuckled Mr. Pooch, edging her relentlessly into a

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corner. "Go on, squawk yer head off and see if *I* care! The only ones which can hear you is me and the fishes!"

Connemara felt like adding bitterly, "And that poor fish up on the bridge!" as she stared scornfully at the seemingly unperturbed and still watching McTish. But she saved her breath and concentrated all her efforts in avoiding the rushes of the determined Mr. Pooch.

Within the space of the next five minutes, Connemara's costume had been ripped and torn to fluttering ribbons by his hungry hands. Darkly purpling bruises were appearing on her naked arms and shoulders, but the constant rolling of the yacht and her dexterous squirming and clawing at Mr. Pooch's curiously working face enabled her to break away time and again from his embrace. The sight of her bared loveliness had swiftly brought a desire in no way connected with the fifty thousand dollars into the glittering slits that were Mr. Pooch's eyes, and Connemara's pulses leaped madly with a new and numbing fear.

At last, with Pooch so close to her that his panting breath beat on her face and his groping hands were within an inch of her throat, Connemara

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wrenched away, sprang to the rail, and gasped over her shoulder :

“If you touch me—I—I’ll jump overboard—I *mean* it!”

To her surprise, Mr. Pooch fell back a step.

“Can you swim?” he inquired, almost casually.

“Yes—very well indeed!” panted Connemara, on the verge of hysteria from this sudden application of the brakes to the heroics of a moment before.

“Different *here!*” said Mr. Pooch laconically. “And I’ll tell the cock-eyed world I ain’t gonna take no lessons *to-night!* Hop down off that rail and we’ll talk matters over. I’m gettin’ sick of this clownin’! Who in blazes *are* you, anyways?”

“Will you put me ashore?” parried Connemara, still poised on the rail.

“Oh, be yourself!” grunted Mr. Pooch disgustedly. “Every copper in the wide, wide world is lookin’ for us now, and it’s a cinch *you* don’t wanna meet no John Laws any more than *I* do! Who’s that cake eater which was with you on the ferry?”

“Who are *you?*” queried Connemara in turn.

“Me?” grinned Mr. Pooch. “Why, I’m the fifth horseman of the yoo-cal-iptis. Never mind who *I* am! Why don’t you get sensible and hand over

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that fifty thousand bucks and be done with it? You don't *look* like no Dumb Dora, why *act* like one? Your boy friend has left you flat on your ear and Swede's gang'll be along any minute, so——”

A faint hail over the water abruptly cut off Mr. Pooch's summing up. He stepped quickly to the rail beside Connemara, peering eagerly into the gloom with her. The hail was not repeated and, determined to guide any possible assistance to her, Connemara gathered her breath together and released a sudden, piercing, “*H-e-l-p!*”

With a startled oath, Mr. Pooch clamped his hands firmly over her lips and tore her from the rail. Connemara desperately sought to free herself from his nauseating embrace, but this time Pooch held her tightly gripped in the crook of one arm, while his free hand began an exploration of her garments in search of the packet of bank notes. Crimson with rage and embarrassment, Connemara fought wildly, encouraged by a louder repetition of the hail from the surrounding murk. It seemed closer this time, and Connemara, squirming frantically away from Pooch, prayed that it was.

The thatch of red hair surmounted by the white cap of McTish slowly rose over the hatchway. In

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one hand the little man held an iron bar and he hefted it speculatively as he surveyed the struggling pair, before stepping into the cockpit. His movements were deliberate and unhurried—he might have been completely detached from the picture. Part way over he even stopped to arrange neatly a protruding coil of rope. Mr. Pooch appeared not to see McTish, doubtless believing him safely accounted for by the hatch padlock, for at Connemara's hopefully eager glance at the little Scotchman over Pooch's shoulder, Pooch only laughed aloud, wrenching her wrist cruelly to restrain her struggles. McTish advanced, still slowly, but strangely sobered, until within a few inches of Pooch's straining back. Then McTish coughed, rather apologetically.

"Eh—that'll be all o' that; stand away from the girl," requested McTish evenly.

"Take the air, you little rat—I'll slap you for a mock orange!" growled Mr. Pooch, too busy with Connemara to look around.

He should have done so! For without another word and as calmly as though driving a nail with a hammer, McTish raised his arm and the iron bar clunked on Mr. Pooch's head. Silently that gentleman sank to the deck at Connemara's feet.

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"And that's that!" remarked McTish lightly, tossing his weapon aside.

Amazement—and suspicion—momentarily overcame Connemara's gratitude. She stared at McTish almost accusingly. "Then you—you are *not* intoxicated—you *weren't* when we came on board?" she murmured. "You were shamming! Why—"

"What—*me* drunk?" broke in McTish, with a curl of his lip, "I never touch the stuff—eh—that is, I don't *drink* it!" He touched Mr. Pooch's inert body with a contemptuous toe. "And now, my girl, who's *this* swab and where's the chief?"

"Chief?" repeated Connemara vaguely. "What chief?"

"Don't stall, my girl; I heard his voice a bit ago, as I was kicking my way out of the after hatch. Where is he?" demanded McTish sternly.

Connemara suddenly recalled the familiar voice that had called from the blackness over the rail of the yacht. She began to explain, but at that moment there was a chorus of yells from seemingly underneath the bows, a rending crash and then—silence!

"We've run some damned fool down—look over the side and see what you can see, while I stop the engines!" yelled McTish and dashed away.

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Feeling certain she was just a figure in somebody's nightmare, Connemara leaned far over the rail, straining her eyes at the sullen black waters. The throbbing of the yacht's engine had ceased, and the boat now rolled aimlessly on the waves as McTish ran past her with a lighted flare in one hand and a life preserver in the other. Determined not to be left alone, Connemara summoned her nerve and cautiously moved forward. She reached the bow just as a drenched and bedraggled figure threw one leg over the yacht's side. At her involuntary exclamation the visitor from the sea halted in the process of boarding the yacht and stared at her, displaying a beautiful set of molars.

"Well, well, well—what a delightful evening!" smilingly greeted Mr. David Lacy, of hither and yon. "Fancy meeting *you* here!"

A helpless gurgle was the only witty retort Connemara could think of.

Lacy vaulted lightly to the deck, shedding water like a spaniel. "Where's McTish?" he demanded.

Connemara nodded speechlessly to the rail. McTish, fishing diligently with his life preserver, had evidently got a bite and was now hauling in with a will. Drawing near Connemara, Lacy observed

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her torn garments with a puzzled frown—then his eyes wandered to the prostrate Mr. Pooch, who was beginning to show signs of awakening. Shaking his head quizzically, Lacy knelt down and removed Pooch's coat, and, arising, tendered the garment to Connemara with a bow. Connemara hastily buttoned it around her bared shoulders, while Mr. Lacy began to twist the water out of his own soaked clothing.

"Well, what do you know—eh—Sister?" he inquired, with his winning smile.

"First, get some rope or something and tie that—that beast up!" commanded Connemara, finding her voice at last and gesturing to the recumbent Pooch. "He tried to— Oh, don't stand there looking at me. Tie him up or I'll do it myself!"

Lacy disappeared down a hatchway, returning a moment later with a coil of stout rope. Meanwhile McTish had assisted aboard from the sea a burly gentleman and a lady. The lady collapsed gracefully to the deck and as Connemara ran to her with quick sympathy, the big man turned on the scowling McTish.

"You rich boloneys think you own the ocean, don't you?" he bellowed, shaking a huge wet fist

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under the little Scotchman's placid nose. "I got a good mind to knock you silly, you red-headed boob!"

"Shut up, Doc, you're all wet!" called the lady weakly, sitting up on the deck. This was a true statement, however she meant it.

"Are you all right, Sweetie?" asked the big fellow anxiously.

"K. O.!" responded the girl tersely. "Where's that guy we had with us?"

"I hope he's drowned!" was the unfeeling answer. "The Big stiff—he was a Jonah! Hey, who's in charge of this tub?" he added to McTish.

McTish turned to look at Lacy, who, rope in hand, was in controversy with Mr. Pooch.

"Stick out your arms like a nice little boy," suggested Lacy. "I'm going to tie you up in a neat little package and ship you somewhere where you'll be more appreciated!"

Mr. Pooch slowly arose to his feet. He surveyed the slighter man contemptuously and then his roving eyes took in the little group in the bow who were watching the tableau with various emotions. As his glance fell on Connemara, his eyes brightened. Mr. Pooch had a one-track mind.

"Gimme that fifty grand!" he demanded hoarsely,

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staggering toward her. The big man and his girl companion started and looked at each other significantly.

“Do what you’re told!” exclaimed Lacy impatiently—and dropped Mr. Pooch to the deck with a perfectly timed left hook. Immediately stooping, he began the process of tying up his victim.

“Where’s that gun?” whispered Doc, shaking Sweetie’s arm.

“I lost it when this scow hit us,” Sweetie answered —then warned, “don’t start nothin’ you can’t finish, Doc!”

Ignoring her advice, Doc strode over to Connemara and grasped her arm roughly. “So you *did* get the jack, hey?” he growled. “Well, that makes things easier. Gimme that dough or I’ll croak you!”

Lacy reached Connemara’s side as though shot from a cannon and while Sweetie’s warning shriek was still on the air, his right fist shot out and thudded against Doc’s jaw. But Doc did not go down, *à la* Pooch. Instead, he returned the compliment with much vigor. In another instant the two men were threshing about the rolling deck, while McTish, in response to Mr. Lacy’s shouted com-

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mand held the struggling, clawing, howling Sweetie, with both arms tightly pinioned at her sides. From his prostrate position on the floor, Mr. Pooch watched the proceedings with mournful interest.

A fortunate blow from Lacy, who even to Connemara's inexperienced eyes seemed to be something of a boxer, sent Doc crashing to the deck. The big man's head struck a projection with a resounding and soul-satisfying bump. He lay still and unresisting as Lacy deftly bound him and with the help of McTish rolled him alongside Mr. Pooch. Released during the process, Sweetie leaned against the rail and glared at each in turn.

"If I don't tie you, will you make an attempt to act like a lady?" Lacy asked the girl.

"Leave me and Doc go and we'll call it a night," answered Sweetie, apparently succumbing to Mr. Lacy's smile. "Tomorrow's another day!"

"And you may put *me* ashore also, while you're about it!" broke in Connemara, annoyed at the half-admiring glance Sweetie bestowed on Lacy.

Lacy let out a few more inches on his smile and surveyed both girls thoughtfully.

"I cannot leave you young ladies as abruptly as that," he said. "*You* have interested me strangely

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—eh, *Sister?*—while *you*, Sweetie, made a decided impression on me back there in the dory!” And he rubbed a noticeable lump on his head gingerly.

“What *are* you going to do with us?” asked Connemara anxiously. The mocking light in his eyes disturbed her.

“I will decide *that* later!” he answered mysteriously. “Just now I want to know who you all are and what this inane nonsense is all about!”

“Well, first,” smiled Connemara, “you can take this beastly money. That may prevent any further attempts on my life!”

Lacy stared at the bundle of banknotes in her outstretched hand. So did Mr. Pooch and Doc. Mr. Pooch emitted a baffled groan and rolled on his side, as if to hide the scene from his view. Doc, who was swearing with great heartiness, stopped abruptly.

“I don’t want this. What is it—how much?” asked Lacy.

“It’s more than I’m going to be responsible for,” said Connemara firmly. “Please—please—just stick it in your pocket—or anywhere.”

“We-ll,” said Lacy, “it’s very irregular, but I’m always anxious to do what a lady requests.”

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He took the money and stuffed it carelessly in the pocket of his wet coat. As he did so out of the darkness came a gruff hail. A shapeless hulk grated against the yacht's side.

H. C. Witwer

CHAPTER IX

By SOPHIE KERR

CHAPTER IX

McTISH and Lacy, Connemara and the Sweetie person, were galvanized into attention and rushed to the rail. Pooch and Doc could do nothing but stretch their necks anxiously in the direction of the hail, and squirm uneasily.

"Ship aho-o-o-y!" sang out Lacy. "Look out, you'll run us down, you poor goofs. What're y' doing? Where's your lights?"

There was silence for a moment, and then the voice, much less gruff, came from the darkness, accented in amazement: "By the great horn spoon, that's Dave Lacy and his old tub, the *Bloody Nuisance*. Dave, you scoundrel, what are you doing here?"

"Listen—say!" Lacy's voice was just as much amazed, and quite hilariously joyful. "Why, Bob Mer——"

"S-s-s-s-t!" said the other voice, sharply. "Don't

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call my name! I'm looking for somebody, somebody in a little foolish boat, maybe two of them, sneaking round these waters and being as inconspicuous as possible. Seen anything like that to-night?"

"I've only been aboard a few minutes. I'll ask McTish. What about it, Mac?"

"Not a sign nor a sound," declared McTish. "And I've been on the lookout too."

"Oh, damn!" went on the unseen voice. "Just my rotten luck. Say, Dave, you going to anchor here?"

"I might, if there was any inducement," said Lacy. "Why don't you come on board? I've got Scotch and rye."

A low groan of anguish burst simultaneously from Doc and Pooch at this announcement.

"I'm going to take a little quiet run round, for half an hour or so, but I'll be back and go you a couple down the hatch," said the voice. "You stick right here, old son, and wait for me. And keep a weather eye out for any little boats with two or three people in 'em. If any such come round, and you can inveigle the folks on board, lay 'em out with a marline spike, and hold 'em so's I can look 'em over.

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I mean it. I'm out on a big thing, and any first aid I can get will be welcome, even if it comes from a chump like you. So long, old dear—see you later."

"Who is yon talkative laddie buck?" asked McTish dourly, as the boat beside them slipped away quietly into the night.

"One of my college friends—he's in the government service. Let's get that anchor out. She's drifting like a seaweed in this tide."

For a few minutes McTish and Lacy were gruntingly occupied with the business of anchoring. Then, as the *Bloody Nuisance* settled herself to ride the waves as sweetly as a summer boarder rides the best porch rocking chair, Lacy got out a cigarette and lit it greedily.

"This has been something of a night," he said. "I need stimulant. McTish, you keep on watch and I'll gather myself a drop of coffee and get on some dry clothes. Ladies, how's your various thirsts?"

"I'd love a cup of coffee. I heard about it when I first came on board, but it never appeared," said Connemara. "I'm hungry too."

"So'm I," confided Sweetie. "I could eat a hot dog made out of my own pet caiodoodle."

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"Oh, do you like dogs?" asked Connemara, interested. "I'm frightfully fond of them—I have the most adorable police dog named——"

"Named Rex, I'll bet a million," said Lacy.

"Then you lose. His name is Athos."

"What d'you know about Athos, Sister?" asked Lacy wonderingly. "Did someone suggest the name to you?"

"Don't be silly. Why shouldn't I know about Athos, even if it was ages ago that I read 'The Three Musketeers.'"

"This *is* interesting. I didn't know that girls in your walk of life had definite literary tastes. I must look into this further. In the meantime, please excuse me."

He disappeared into the little bunk room at the back of the cabin. Sweetie looked understandingly at Connemara.

"It ain't the only thing he don't know, I betcha," she said. "He sounds to me like an awful bunch of ready language. But swell, too, in a way, if you get what I mean. Class, you know. I always like 'em classy. Gawd, I wisht I had some dry clothes. I'm soaking. And I've lost my lipstick, and my gum——" she hastily explored her left stocking, and came up

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beaming. "Say, what d'you know! Lookit!" She displayed a small shiny vanity case and a package of chewing gum. "They ain't hurt a bit neither."

She took a piece of the gum and passed another to Connemara. "Here," she said, "nobody ever said of me that I wasn't square with other ladies."

"Thanks," said Connemara. "Thanks awfully, but—well—the fact is, I don't chew gum."

"Oh!" said Sweetie, frankly staring. "Why not? Got false teeth?"

"No," said Connemara, improvising wildly, for she could see that Sweetie was all ready to be offended at the refusal of her offering, "but I've got an awfully fussy old maid aunt and she made me promise I wouldn't ever chew gum. You know," she went on, to change the subject, "I imagine that man"—she nodded toward the bunk room—"that man would lend you some clothes and you could dry yours. Mine are dry enough, but they're in rags, thanks to that wretch." She indicated Pooch.

"The dirty dawg," said Sweetie sympathetically. "Say, why don't you grind your heel in his face now he's tied up? I would, believe me, if he'd roughed me. If I had a needle and thread, I'd mend you up like a streak o' lightning. I'm quite a girl with

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the needle. I used to be head skirt hand at a big Fifth Avenue shop. Honest, I did."

"Well, for Heaven's sake," said Connemara, "why did you ever leave a good job for a wild life like this?"

"I got sick of it. Sewing, sewing, sewing all day long on nicer clo'es 'n I could ever have myself, and the forelady findin' fault—reg'lar poison ivy she was—an' all day long in the house at work! Then, when I'd get out to the movies, at night, I'd see life like it ought to be. You know—somethin' doin' every minute. An' then Doc, he come along—an' here we are."

"Here we are indeed," said Connemara. "And I wonder when we're ever going to get away. Women can certainly do impulsive things, Miss Sweetie. I don't like to call you that, it sounds too—too——"

"Don't mind that. You can call me Gloria-Swan-son-Mary-Pickford-Lillian Gish, if you wanna, but there ain't goin' to be no honest-to-Gawd monickers spilled on this party. Say, I do wisht I could mend you up. You look like somethin' the cat brought in in that old coat and that dirty white stuff hangin' out below. Hey, mister, in there—you——"

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“Coming, Sweetie,” said David Lacy, sticking his head out of the bunk room. “Just waiting for the coffee to boil up for the third time.”

“You got any sewing things, needle and thread and scissors?” demanded Sweetie. “If you have, clear out o’ that hole down there and let us ladies have it. We got to do a little private work, her and me.”

David Lacy appeared now, with a tray containing steaming coffee in cups without saucers, an opened can of condensed milk, and some stray lumps of sugar. In his other hand he had a large tin of crackers. He was dressed in fresh dry clothes, and his hair, though still wet, was brushed, and the wetness gave rather the affect of fashionable slickness.

“Class,” said Sweetie, whispering to Connemara. “What’d I tell you? He’s class. Oh, boy, that coffee smells good! Come to mamma, darling!” She seized a cup, half emptied the condensed milk in it, added four lumps of sugar and seized a handful of crackers. Naturally she at once became incapable of further speech.

The coffee smelled and tasted good to Connemara too. She drank it gratefully, but her mind was on Sweetie’s offer of a moment before. Connemara

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mara was suffering acutely from the knowledge that she was grotesquely dressed. Lacy had taken coffee to McTish and stayed beside him, talking in a low tone. This was Connemara's opportunity.

"Let's go into that place—where he was, and see if we can't find some dry things for you. And if there's anything to sew with, and you *would* get me together a little, I'd be eternally grateful."

Sweetie gulped the last of her coffee, crammed the last of her crackers in her mouth. "Awri'," she said, "I'm strong enough to do anything now."

The two girls moved together to the bunk room. A little rummaging brought to light some men's clothes, and with considerable giggling Sweetie was presently changed into a smallish, dapper youth in correct yachting get up of white trousers and blue coat. The clothes were large for her, but the general effect was good. She spread her own things to dry as best she could in the limited space, and then looked about her capably. A small box on the shelf that was evidently the dressing table—for there was a mirror above it and a comb on it—caught her eye, and she opened it and brought out in triumph a huge needle, a spool of white thread, and a pair of scissors.

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"No thimble—but it don't matter. Say, take off them things and let's see what we can do."

Connemara was obedient, and watched Sweetie, fascinated, as the girl shook out the ample breadths of the nun's robe. "Lot's of stuff here, even if it is kinda ragged out. Listen—I'm going to cut you a new dress, a one-piece slip, and sew it together so you'll look human. You can't go round here with all this mess flapping round your feet, specially when you got such good looking feet. Lemme hold this up to you. Gee, you certainly got swell underclo'es."

She held the stuff against Connemara, and then hacked away at it boldly. She seized the needle and thread, and made stitches so swift that Connemara's eyes could not follow them. She was fiercely concentrated and did not speak, except once, to murmur, "Gee, this brings back the days at Madame's."

Connemara, watching her, realized that Sweetie was really a very pretty girl, and that with her bold bandit manner laid aside she was rather a nice one with considerable strength of character in her features.

It took Sweetie hardly half an hour to do her work. She stood up and slipped the garment she had made over Connemara's head. She tore off a

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long strip of the stuff that was left and tied it deftly about her waist. "'Course I haven't hemmed it, but fringe around the bottom of the skirt is good enough style. And it ain't got sleeves, but that's style too. And believe me, girlie, the sewing ain't any worse than lots I've seen in French models. Say, you look swell; honest you do. I always was the one to get good lines, if I do say it myself."

Connemara craned her neck at her reflection in the little mirror. The dress in the essentials was exactly like many others hung in her wardrobe at home, a sleeveless one-piece slip, with a simple tie belt. "Pretty nifty, eh?" said Sweetie, "I'll tell the world it is. Say, you and me—we look like a high-class boating party now. This shingle bob of mine goes grand with my pants."

Shingle bob! At the words Connemara turned and looked at her companion, her eyes distended—it might have been with fear, or perhaps merely excitement. Her hair—it must be hidden. But how? Sudden decision seized her. She stooped and gathered up the remains of her nun's costume, and tore another strip off it.

"I need a hat to go with my dress," she said

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briefly. "Look—a woman in Paris showed me how to make a turban right on your head. She used tulle, but this will do." Deftly and carefully she folded the strip of white stuff. Deftly and carefully she bound it round her head with a clever twist over in the front that gave it character and shape. "It's on the same principle that the Hindus wind their turbans," she explained, not remembering that Sweetie's knowledge of Hindus and their turbans was probably nil. The little box that had held the sewing materials yielded several big pins, regular man's size spikes of pins. Connemara tucked the ends of the strip under at the side and secured them with two of these pins. A pin on the other side, and one in front held the rest of the turban perfectly taut and trim.

"There," she said to Sweetie, "what do you think of it?"

Sweetie was moved to genuine admiration. "Kid, you're there!" she exclaimed. "If you didn't get into a strong light, anybody'd say you looked like a million dollars. That's the niftiest bonnet I've seen in a thousand years. Show me how to do that trick sometime, will you?"

"I certainly will," said Connemara. "The best of

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this is it hides my hair completely, and that's what I want. There's a reason, Sweetie, and though it seems remote now, during a night like this I feel that I must prepare for any contingency. But I haven't thanked you for making my dress. It's a wonderful dress, Sweetie, and you're the cleverest girl I ever met. And oh, how different I feel with it on!"

"To say nothing of how wonderful you look," added Sweetie. "Say, take a piece of the left-over goods and use it for a scarf. A scarf's all you need to make you right up to the minute and a couple seconds beyond."

She rummaged through the wreckage of the nun's costume once more. "There musta been twenty yards of goods in this rig," she exclaimed. "Lucky there was too. Here, how's this?" She brought out a long piece and laid it over Connemara's shoulders. "Throw it round your neck sort of swell and careless. That's the idea. Well, come on, let's go and see what the babies on deck are up to. I'll bet their eyes will pop when they see us. Pants do give you such a good free feeling—I wisht women never wore skirts."

They came out of the bunk room into the dimness

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of the deck, and as they did so David Lacy came forward.

"I've missed your sweet society, dear ladies, very much," he started to say, and then his voice sharpened to amazement. He was staring at Connemara, metamorphosed from a nun into a modern girl, white frock, white turban, white scarf. "Why," he exclaimed breathlessly, "why—you are—you *are*—I did see you at Auteuil—I could swear—but no, it's too fantastic—"

He broke off, aware that the girl was staring past him with puzzled eyes.

"What's the matter with that little light on the mast?" she asked. "It's been giving the queerest flashes for the last two minutes—long and short ones like somebody signaling."

Sophie Kerr

CHAPTER X

By ROBERT GORDON ANDERSON

CHAPTER X

“FLASHES from the masthead!” Lacy’s words were half startled ejaculation, half question, his glance following the direction of hers. Sure enough, the lantern winked once, then relapsed into its usual fixed white stare. The signaling, if signaling it was, had ceased.

Perplexed, for he had never rigged up any such outfit on his boat, he looked around for the cause. McTish was again bending over his engine; Pooch and Doc were still lying hog-tied, forward. But no! Doc *had* moved from his position—undoubtedly by rolling—several widths of him, aft to the heel of the mast.

“Didn’t I tell you to stay where you were put?” Lacy demanded of the recumbent Doc, and tried to prod him away. Doc, however, proved stubborn, and the young man drew back his leg in that arc which Charley O’Hearn—and the reporters—so gracefully describe, when he tries for goal in the

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Yale Bowl. But apparently the beauty of that line from heel to hip had no charms for Doc. Under its threat he moved reluctantly, and Lacy, bending over, discovered a button sunk a little below the level of the deck so that no passing heel could depress it.

"So, that's it!" he exclaimed. "McTish must have installed it, and on my own boat; he has his nerve—" Then to Doc, "What have you been trying to do? Come, now, hand it out straight and cut out the trimmings."

"*Do?*" in a tone of puzzled innocence. "Nawthin'—just rolled over to keep me wings from goin' to sleep."

"And purely by accident found this button, I suppose."

"That's it, Cap," returned Doc airily. "I found it there and tried it to see what would happen."

"Of course, you couldn't by any chance have been signaling?"

"Signalin'! Far be it from me," the big man declared. "I did see some little flashes like, comin' from that there stick" (indicating the mast with a jerk of his head sidewise) "but I didn't think they meant nothin'. Who'd I be signalin' to round here, hey?"

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"Well, see you don't try to find some one," Lacy said grimly. "And get back to where you were before. Quick, now!"

Under the prod of an impatient foot Doc was forced back to his old position forward, and Lacy, scowling, made his way aft.

"I didn't see the flashes," he explained to McTish, "but he must have been sending off something. Have you any idea of our bearings?"

"We're off Sea Cliff now," McTish replied, pointing abaft; "yon's Execution Light. An' this is the mou' o' Hempstead Harbor."

"We're not far from Bayville then," Lacy commented. "Now I'd suggest that we pull up anchor and head north, hugging the shore. I don't like the idea of your Swedish friend catching those signals."

The Scotchman's jaw fell in disgust. "Why, mon, that's what we want!" he exclaimed.

"Mac," the other returned, "I've a wholesome admiration for your canniness and fighting ability, but you told me yourself that 'The Swede' had a half-dozen bruisers aboard. We can't tackle them all. I hope Bob will succeed in locating them first."

"Weel, lad, I'm sorry if ye are afeared, but if

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ye'll just pick oot *one* o' them—ye can pick on the saftest—I'll tak' care o' the ither sax.” In moments of excitement McTish became very Scotch indeed. He added, as if in mollification of his charge of cowardice, “But I see what's fashin' ye. It's the lassie.”

“I suppose she's one of them,” assented David gloomily. “But why should she have told me about the light in that case?”

“Because she's a smar-rt lassie an' able to pu' the wool ower your eyes fine if ye gie her half a chance,” McTish declared with conviction.

“No,” David insisted. “She was surprised. As surprised as I was. She wasn't acting.”

“Maybe,” the little Scot said dryly. “But I'd not put it past her.”

“We're losing time,” Lacy reminded him, ignoring this thrust, “which is what you're playing for, of course. You do what I say and head north or I take back the boat. You've bagged enough now with those two birds and Sweetie, to say nothing of the fifty thousand——”

“Which I see that ye keep in yer pants,” broke in McTish, grinning, “an' a fine crook ye are yersel'. I'll start her up, laddie, on one condeetion—that ye

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warn the gir-rl as far awa' frae that button as ye
do the rest. I'm trustin' nane o' them the nicht."

To these terms Lacy consented with suspicious
readiness, and after they had got under way hurried
aft to Connemara.

The latter greeted him with a little smile, the gay-
ety of which was slightly forced.

"Look here," she said, "I've been thinking. I be-
lieve I've guessed the riddle. Only you'll have to
tell me when it's to be released. I'm horribly curi-
ous."

"If by 'it' you mean your friend Pooch, I should
say in about twenty years—though sometimes they
do get off for good behavior."

He was suddenly quite sure she was making a
tremendous effort to keep her lips from trembling,
but she continued to smile unconcernedly.

"This *is* a movie, isn't it—in thirty-seven reels?
That's why I wanted to know when it was to be
released, so that I could see the results. I've never
taken part in one before. And here we all are, Pooch
and Doc, two perfect duckies of villains, and
Sweetie, the soubrette—isn't that what you'd call
her, or am I going back to Aunt Celimena's days?
Then there are cars being stolen and spilled all over

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the landscape, and messages in cipher, and flashes from mastheads and motorboats popping up out of nowhere. I'm properly thrilled, and, besides, I'm the star, I suppose. And the salaries are true, too—I never believed 'em—but whew! fifty thousand a night!"

"As long as you're casting us, would you mind telling me my rôle?"

A moment she studied him, slightly to his discomfiture. Then, "Let's see your profile—h'm—" "

"Is it as bad as that?"

"Yes, every bit—and you're the handsome juvenile"—he bowed—"or else one of those ridiculous sheiks." Here he did not bow, but instead answered, "And I'll play opposite you—on the other side of the bars."

"You mean?"

"I'll give you one guess. It ought to be easy, for you've been awfully lucky if you haven't looked through them before."

"Something actually criminal then; how much more thrilling, when all the time I've been looking for the camera man!" She paused dramatically. "Oh, I get it: you're not the handsome juvenile—you're the director, and trying to put me in the spirit

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of my rôle" (she looked down). "But where are the puttees?"

"You *are* clever!" he returned, perhaps with not as much aplomb as he would have liked, "but you're too good for this game. Why don't you try something less desperate? With your talent you could go far on the stage."

"Farther than fifty thousand?" Connemara challenged him with a laugh. "Aren't you optimistic?"

"Say," remarked a voice just behind them, its tones a trifle shrill. "I guess I wouldn't harp too much on that fifty thousand if I were you, Sister. Not in present company, anyhow."

With a queer sense of shock, Connemara and Lacy spun about to behold the pert little figure of Sweetie, seated nonchalantly on the prostrate Pooch, her hands in her pockets, swaying to and fro, entirely unmoved by his protesting grunts and writhings.

"To think Sister'd tie the double cross on Poochie," she informed the night about them with an air of commiseration that made her unwilling cushion writhe afresh. "An' him lying here all nicely roped up like he was doin' some Lon Chaney stunt. An' you gotta nerve too, Mr. Klassy Klothes" (this to Lacy) "tryin' to steal poor

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Poochie's skirt away from him, when he can't look out for himself." She paused a moment to illustrate her pity by digging her exaggerated French heels deep in the paunch of the prostrate Pooch, then addressed him, directly this time.

"Just tell the flip gentleman what you'll do to him, when you get loose—pretty now, an' polite, ol' dear. Aw! that ain't pretty, Poochie! Say, Sister, yu'd better stick your fingers in your ears. When Pooch is sore, what he says ain't fit for publication in the 'Police Gazette.' "

It was all very incomprehensible, Lacy reflected uncomfortably. Sweetie's charge of intimacy on the part of the girl at his side with a grotesque figure like Pooch was impossible, and made purely through malevolence, of course. But with him she must be connected in some way.

He decided he must talk with Sweetie. She was shrewd but voluble, and if voluble might say too much. However, he did not feel so much like pumping her when he had left the other girl and had joined the slim figure now at the rail. Pert as were her sharp little features, hard the snappy black eyes, her face was attractive, pathetic as well—almost that of a child, he thought, yet as old as the ages

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with a wisdom it should not have had. And feeling the pity of it, he made a bad beginning.

"You've got too good a mind, little one," he said, "to waste in a game like this."

"For Gawd's sake, haven't you any other line?" she retorted tartly. "You was handing that to Sister a minute ago. But I notice, like most sky pilots, you pass the hat first, and fifty grand's some c'lection, I'll tell the world."

"That's so. Well, I'll can the sermon. It's your lead—or, is this any better?" And, muttering to himself, "Rotten taste with the other looking on, but I must find out about that ship," he placed his arm around the tight little waist, and not at all tentatively. At which Sweetie softly yielded to his embrace and her arm stole round him in turn.

A moment or so they sat, conversing in slangy and inconsequential nothings, she snuggling closer, when suddenly his hand closed on hers, like a vise.

"No, you don't!" he exclaimed.

She giggled. "As a dip, I'm a dumb-bell," she said, not at all embarrassed, "but never mind; go on don't let a little thing like that break up a petting party."

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"You're right. Such a *contretemps* but adds the needed spice to love."

"'Country town adds spice!' Say, are you thinking of going ashore to Bayville? You are the limit," she added, "and no three miles to you neither; you stretch clear to Bermuda."

"Speaking to that motion," he replied, "I wonder if that ship'll be where the Swede promised."

"Wise, aren't you?" she asked sweetly. "You think just because you've loved me up a little I'll give you that info'. Well, you can leave your fin there awri', but that's all the good it'll do you."

Now, during this conversation Connemara had first looked volumes, then tossed her head, again returned to study the darkness over the lee rail. Several times she repeated this maneuver, though discreetly, as she pondered over his status with the girl. He was undeniably charming; but, then, charming men were sometimes strangely interested in girls far beneath them. And too, charming men made, so those experienced said, the most expert of criminals. He was brave, handsome—of course that was not to the point—but he seemed so eminently well bred and—well, anyway, Connemara

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mara also was finding things a bit incomprehensible.

But what was that staccato *put-put* off their quarter! That good-looking Harvard boy back again? She made out the lines of the oncoming hulk. It was longer and beamier than Bob's little craft; larger even than the *Bloody Nuisance*. And that gruff hail was not at all like the gallant Bob's.

"Stand by, or we'll fire!"

"Golly!" said Connie. "They're looking for my salary again. I knew it was too good to last." And reaching for support, instead of the rail she clutched the hand of Lacy, who, at the sound, had sprung to her side.

The bald pate of the Scot, like a moonlit desert with an auburn mirage, appeared once more over the cockpit. He chuckled audibly.

"Ye've lost, Davie; there's the Swede."

"Yes, confound your Scotch dourness, or whatever you call it! I believe you monkeyed with that engine on purpose."

He shrugged his shoulders hopelessly, adding, "All right, I've picked my man; you pick your 'sax,' old Scot. And I hope you get killed."

But immediately the demand was repeated from

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the leader of the crew whom they could dimly discern through the murk, and Lacy turned to the girl.

"Can you swim as far as that shore—if we get in trouble?"

With her nod of assent, he picked her up bodily and almost threw her in the cockpit, growling out, "Lie low; they may fire"; then, tossing a life belt after her, temporized with Fate as personified in that insolent voice, by running to the wheel and ordering McTish to address the newcomers as they circled round them.

"Who is it speakin' us?" roared the latter through cupped hands. "Are ye some o' them damned revenooers?"

"You bloody Scotch stool pigeon, bring that sea-goin' hack of yours alongside or we'll blow you to—" The wind muffled this last, but the speaker's geography, Connie was sure, was impressively accurate.

A moment Lacy reflected, as he caught the gleam of a six-pounder. There were seven against the two, nine if you counted Doc and Pooch, who would be freed the moment the others came aboard. His brain, working with lightning rapidity, showed

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him only one possible way out—a chance in a hundred, at that. The Swede's craft was an old tub, the nose of their own of steel. It was a desperate expedient he had in mind, but it might succeed.

"All right," he called, "we'll go about. You heave to and wait for us." And whirling the wheel, he swung the nose of the *Bloody Nuisance* around; at full speed they covered the five boat's lengths of clear water that now lay between them, and before the bewildered crew on the other boat had time to diagnose the maneuver, were upon them.

Amidships the *Bloody Nuisance* struck, stoving in her enemy's side, and blunting as she did so her own gallant nose. There was a crash, the shearing of shorn timbers and plates, a wild medley of oaths, and the smaller boat backed out, as the other craft listed, the water pouring through the gaping wound in her side.

But at this point their own engine balked; and time had been lost in the extrication. There was not enough clear water now between the two crafts to repel the boarders.

Up chain and rope, and over the rail they swarmed, six of them, the seventh falling backward

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with the bark from McTish's revolver, which, however, was instantly knocked from his hand.

For a second the eyes of the girl under the white turban, no whiter now than her face, peered over the cockpit, trying to make out the types of those engaged in the *melée*. A glimpse of the one in advance she caught—a big thick-chested man, coatless, with a torn and disreputable jersey that seemed several sizes too small for him and a battered derby on his head, two big hams of hands flailing through the air.

Now Connie had never seen any fights except on the screen, and in the daily public turmoil of our subways. And this had a sort of private character about it, out here on the lonely water, to which the Celt in her rose with a queer exultation. Suddenly she was excited rather than frightened. Her breath came faster, and at that moment she became aware of Lacy engaged with the leader. The Swede was the heavier of the two, but Lacy seemed to Connemara's anxious eyes to be more than holding his own, in spite of that handicap. There was a sure drive to his arms, left and right, left and right, to ribs and face, several blows almost landing on the point of the jaw, which she remembered

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to have heard was important; and all this while he kept lightly inside of the other's wild swings which flailed around him, missing him entirely or else only shaving his well-modelled head.

It was pretty, she thought, even in the midst of her concern; she could almost understand why women could attend prize fights. Only, even now, she could not, somehow, make herself believe the scene before her was quite real. After a time she would wake up back at Moorelands, in her own bed, and there'd be still that ridiculous problem about Salt and Bing to decide for Aunt Celimena. Then a little cry escaped her and her whole body tensed. The Swede was falling, like a bull she had seen once in a Spanish arena—that same keel and shudder, drop to the knees, the same sickening thud! He was down—motionless.

Impulsively Connemara clambered out of the cockpit, and at once regretted her precipitousness. She had entirely forgotten the others on the deck, who for reasons of revenge had piled on the doughty Scot, and now, having apparently finished him, were climbing all over Lacy from behind.

But it was too late to retreat to her refuge in the cockpit. She was conscious of a pair of eyes in

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the ugliest face she had ever seen, glaring at her. The owner of the eyes, with a gorilla-like hunching of head, neck and shoulder, started toward her. Back, back she retreated to the rail and reached it just as McTish coming to, slid overboard.

A moment only she calculated, though "calculated" is hardly the word—it was her instinct that was functioning quite as rapidly and as wildly as her heart was pounding—then she did it. There was another splash overboard. McTish, just breaking water after his long dive, heard the splash, and an instant afterward the sound of someone swimming a few feet from him, with easy, strong strokes that kept up effortlessly with his own. He had a wild hope that it might be Lacy; instead the voice of Connemara, a breathless little ghost of a whisper, reached him across the wave-splashed blackness.

"I don't know where we're going," it announced in soft bravado, "but I'm on my way too."

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert E. Anderson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'R' at the beginning.

CHAPTER XI

By KERMIT ROOSEVELT

CHAPTER XI

WHEN Mr. Brewster turned away from the telephone with that last startling information about Connemara's flight, there was a moment of decidedly tense silence, which was finally broken by Aunt Celimena.

"There—must be some mistake," she said in a trembling voice almost ludicrously unlike her usual dictatorial assurance. "What are we going to do? We—we can't just stand around and wait for news."

Bing Carrington took an impulsive step forward. "You're not to worry," he said gently. "Of course we'll do something, Miss Moore. It seems to me that the first move is to have a talk with that desk sergeant at police headquarters. I'll take one of your cars, if I may, and go right over."

But Aunt Celimena had herself in hand once more.

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"I am going with you," she announced with determination.

Bing looked doubtful. "If I have anything to report, I'll telephone you at once, of course," he demurred. "But I really don't think——"

"It's not necessary that you should——" Aunt Celimena was recovering rapidly as may be seen. "I wish to talk to that policeman myself."

"In that case, Miss Moore," Mr. Brewster put in nervously, "I feel sure I had better accompany you."

Aunt Celimena nodded absently, fixing an inquiring eye on Saltonstall Adams, who had as yet taken no active part in the discussion.

The latter roused himself hurriedly from the dazed abstraction which had enveloped him ever since that soft and shining red curl of Connemara's had slipped out of its tissue paper package into his astonished palm.

"Naturally I'm going, too," he said simply. "Shall we keep together, Carrington, or divide our forces?"

"Better keep together at first," Bing decided. "Later we'll see."

It was Bing, with his usual cocksure assertiveness, who fell naturally into command of the situa-

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tion, and none of the other three cared, apparently, to dispute him. Even Aunt Celimena seemed rather relieved than otherwise, in spite of her earlier snappishness, to rely on his judgment now.

Therefore, ten minutes later, with Bing at the wheel, the search party of four was heading by motor for the Greenwich police headquarters. Here, to their relief, news awaited them. The stolen car had been traced to the ferry.

"At least we'll know we're not traveling in the opposite direction, as we might easily have done," Aunt Celimena sighed. She had lost a good deal of her usual belligerency during the short run from Moorelands, as Bing noticed with appreciation. She had become further depressed, too, after a few words exchanged with a very noncommittal and unimpressed desk sergeant in the Greenwich police station. The fact that the heiress presumptive to Moorelands had disappeared without explanation, and under decidedly questionable circumstances, appeared to mean little or nothing in Sergeant Flynn's existence. But he did exhibit a lively curiosity as to why two of the searchers should wear fancy dress under their long polo coats. He seemed, too, to

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entertain wholly unreasonable suspicions of a slight somewhere, aimed at his official dignity.

Before proceeding further, Bing set to work to raise Bayville by telephone, and after much exasperating delay succeeded in rousing a sleepy Central, but the ferry office wouldn't answer, and apparently no police station existed. So, after a brief consultation with the other searchers, Bing headed the car back to Stamford.

"I've thought of the very thing," he announced triumphantly. "Harry Harvey's got a motor boat that will take us to Bayville in no time. Harry's in Saratoga, but his engineer knows me, and he lives in the boathouse down by the inlet. You're not to worry, Miss Moore," he repeated soothingly. The rôle of protecting and advising Aunt Celimena was so novel that Bing couldn't resist playing with it from time to time. He had always had an uneasy conviction that the indomitable old lady preferred Salt to himself as a future nephew-in-law, which naturally did nothing to detract from his enjoyment of the present situation.

A winding country lane led from the Boston Post Road to the particular little inlet from the Sound they were headed for, and at the end of this they

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found Harry Harvey's boathouse readily enough, but no engineer. The motorboat, a fairly large one, was locked into a slip over which the boathouse straddled.

The unforeseen absence of the engineer was disconcerting, but Bing was in a mood tonight to ride rough-shod over obstacles, ethical or physical as the case might be, and he declared boldly that since there was no one to give permission, they must do without.

Mr. Brewster was inclined to demur at the forcible removal of another man's property, but his protests were swept aside without formality, and he found himself, somewhat to his own astonishment, following the resourceful Mr. Carrington, gingerly, through a broken window into the dark interior of the boathouse.

Salt and Aunt Celimena waited outside until the doors of the boathouse swung open, after which Bing once more disappeared into the darkness within, to loose the motor boat from its moorings.

The storm had blown over, but it was not until they were within sight of the Long Island shore that the moon broke through the clouds, conveniently in readiness to light their passage into Bayville.

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Mr. Brewster pointed it out to Miss Celimena as complacently as though he, personally, were responsible for its reappearance.

"A good omen, my dear Miss Moore," he suggested, rubbing his thin hands ingratiatingly.

Miss Celimena ignored him. "What's that?" she demanded of no one in particular, lifting a hand for silence. Salt, who was near her, bent forward in a listening attitude.

The sound was repeated, and this time resolved itself into muffled shouting and a few straggling shots at what appeared to be no great distance from them; though, since the moon once more chose to retire behind the heavy wind clouds racing across the sky, it was impossible to see anything.

"Sounds as if rum runners were out tonight," Bing grunted. "Guess they're in a clash with some patrol boat."

Mr. Brewster was evidently of the same opinion, for he immediately began to urge Aunt Celimena to give up the expedition and order the *Filomena's* nose pointed back to Connecticut.

"My dear madam, there isn't the slightest need of your undertaking this wild-goose chase," he

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pleaded. "Let us go back, I beg of you, and these young men can——"

"*Pish!*" said Aunt Celimena with a brevity and decision that would have been crudeness in anyone less naturally majestic. Unfortunately the full effect of the retort was somewhat marred by her having risen to her feet to peer into the darkness ahead, just as a particularly playful wave hit the *Filomena's* bow. Aunt Celimena sat down a little too hurriedly for either dignity or comfort, and panted, glaring about her.

Bing shut off the engine, and they floated for a time, listening for a repetition of the sound of firing, which did not come. Then the moon made one of its periodic reappearances and showed them a motor boat only a few hundred yards away. She had no lights, and the irregular *put-put-put* of her exhaust spoke of trouble. She was distinctly down by the bow, and even in the uncertainty of moonlight and shadow it took no expert to see that she had been badly stove in.

Evidently someone on board her caught sight of the Harvey boat at the same moment, for a vigorous hail came across the water, requesting the *Filomena* to stand by.

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"I don't altogether like the look of this," Bing confided to Salt Adams under his breath, his face troubled. "But she's sinking, that's sure. We'll have to take 'em on board, whoever they are."

The other craft was heading directly for them now, laboring heavily, and Bing, leaving Salt to start their engine, went forward again to the wheel.

What happened next was as perplexing as it was unexpected. The navigator on the approaching boat suddenly put his helm hard over, so that the battered newcomer lay full in the path of the *Filomena*.

Bing, with no time to consider, instinctively selected the side that seemed to offer the better chance of passing, and swung his own wheel. For a moment it looked as though he would get by, but hope was short-lived. The nose of the *Filomena* grazed, jarringly, along the other craft's side, and Bing found himself sprawling in the bilge.

Before he could disentangle himself from Aunt Celimena, who had clutched him with determination at the moment of impact, a man climbed agilely over the *Filomena's* rail and swung himself down on the deck. He was a big man in a wet and torn jersey, and as Bing struggled to his feet he had a

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glimpse over one shoulder of a section of pipe, wielded by one of the brawny arms the jersey covered, descending deliberately in the direction of his own unprotected head. He also saw, to his amazement, that five or six bulky figures had followed the first over the side, and appeared to be hitting senselessly and indiscriminately at anything they saw moving.

Then the moonlight was obscured abruptly for Bing Carrington in a shower of red and golden stars, and, his feet slipping from under him, he shot head first over the *Filomena*'s low rail.

The pipe wielder had struck him a glancing blow, stunning him momentarily, but the plunge into the water revived him sufficiently to realize the advantages of the depths over the surface just then.

By the time bursting lungs had forced him to come up, he was fifty feet or more from the two boats and well in the shadow. A log was bobbing along in the path of the moonlight. Somebody on one of the boats caught sight of it, and immediately a revolver sang out several times, and two bullets spattered the water close to the log. The firer, however, discovering his mistake, desisted, and

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Bing, with cautious intervals of swimming under water, made his way to the near-by shore.

Behind him on the deck he had left so precipitately, pandemonium reigned for the space of a few long-drawn-out minutes, but at the end of that time the boarders, owing to the surprise of the attack and superior numbers, had things their own way, and proceeded to lay the two boats side by side.

The moon, shining impartially on victors and vanquished, showed the original ship's company of the *Filomena* in sorry plight. Salt was propped against the thwarts, his arms pinioned behind him, but his legs free. His classic features were somewhat marred through contact with hob-nailed boots, as well as the length of pipe whose acquaintance Bing had made. He was still a perplexing distance behind the tide of events. Semiconsciously he spelled out the name on the battered bow of the aggressor, *Bloody Nuisance*, and, still hazily, tried to attach some meaning to the name, to grope for some connection, but failed.

Aunt Celimena was stretched out, not far from him, on a bench. She was very pale except for a dark streak of blood that stood out diagonally across

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one cheek. Mr. Brewster lay in a confused and terrified heap in the bottom of the boat.

"I guess I like to croaked the old dame, but she shouldn't have grabbed my legs the way she done, and pinched me too." The speaker removed a loudly checked cap, possessed of an abnormally long peak that had thrown his face into shadow. The moonbeams played caressingly upon a polished dome of surprising magnitude.

Pooch, for it was he, kicked meditatively at the prostrate form of Mr. Brewster, and the man in the torn jersey, who had been the first to board the *Filomena*, came over to stand beside him, staring down at the lawyer.

"This old geezer ain't much better off neither. I guess the other bird's drownded; little Mary here, has a way with her that don't call for much back chat." He patted the section of pipe tenderly. "This here's the hell an' all of a fix Doc an' you have bin and got us into," he added in a different tone. "What're you going to do about it?"

Pooch contemplated the speaker a minute with an expression of virtuous indignation.

"We got you out of, you mean. I'd like to know where you'd bin if Doc hadn't figgered out a way

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to flash that message to you. Walking plumb into a trap, that's where you'd bin, by now. That little Scotch devil had it all baited an' set for you."

Before the other could reply to this, a slight, trim figure appeared on the deck of the crippled boat and announced in a calm voice :

"You won't have to bother with the old *Bloody Nuisance* no more. She's pretty near filled. One o' you heave this guy over."

Without a word Doc clambered over and picked up a limp bundle of clothes, lowering it none too gently into the Swede's tender possession.

"Say, bring a bit of rag with you, Sweetie, to plug up this old Jane," called Pooch, turning, "she's bleeding some."

Sweetie stooped to pick up from the deck something that looked like a white scarf, and, jumping briskly down onto the *Filomena*, bent over Aunt Celimena. After a brief examination, she straightened, casting a glance of withering scorn at Doc, who happened to be nearest. Involuntarily that gentleman retreated a step or two, his face assuming swiftly an abashed and hang-dog expression that sat incongruously enough upon it.

"You're a rough lot, banging a woman about this

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way. That ain't no manners," the girl said fiercely. "Clear out now, an' leave me fix her." Deftly she bathed the victim's face and neck, discovering the gash on her head to be only a superficial wound. She completed her first-aid ministrations by winding the white scarf about her patient's brow turban-wise, giving the old lady a rakish, piratical appearance. Then she stood back and cast an appraising eye over the scene before her.

Sweetie had spoken correctly. The *Bloody Nuisance* had been slowly settling. Now, with a final lurch she dived forward, following her battered bow under.

The Swede watched her disappear, stolidly unconcerned.

"Gets rid of some o' the evidence," he said in a matter-of-fact tone. His glance went to Aunt Celimena's turbanned head, and the little, beady eyes narrowed unpleasantly.

"What's the use of dollin' the old girl up?" he demanded. "We got to clean up all these bums."

Pooch slowly turned to him. "I don't go in for bumping off no birds in bunches. I ain't that kind of a guy, see?"

"Well, what 'n hell d' you want?"

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"I want to get the boat off this mud flat she seems to have landed on for keeps, after that you can set me down here on the Long Island side somewhere handy, and then go to the devil and take her with you."

The Swede muttered something inaudible, but set his crew to work, nevertheless, carrying out the first part of Pooch's suggestion.

With the help of the rapidly rising tide, prying the *Filomena* loose from the mud flat on which she had drifted during the fight, proved a simple task. Salt was ordered into the water to help, and even the bedraggled and thoroughly dazed Brewster was unceremoniously bundled over the side to aid in the launching. Hearty kicks, however, failed entirely to arouse the mysterious stranger whom Doc had lifted down from the deck of the *Bloody Nuisance*. The medicine administered evidently approached being an overdose, for the only response to the kicks was a feeble groan.

As the *Filomena* fetched free there was a scramble to get on board. Salt with his bound arms was hauled roughly up the side, and in rolling over tripped Sweetie's feet from under her. That efficient young person steadied herself by grasping the

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most convenient portion of his anatomy which happened to be his hair. Salt had long since cast dignity and reserve to the winds; and seeing no petticoats to call for a gentlemanly restraint he hurled objurgations at the wearer of Lacy's fashionable yachting costume.

The young lady was about to reply in kind, when she pulled the wretched Salt's head into the light, stared a moment, and with a laugh that the listening Mr. Brewster could not interpret, said:

"If that don't beat the Dutch—if this ain't my little Percy! What's he doing here in this rough company? Mother's darling better watch his step!"

Kermit Roosevelt

CHAPTER XCII

By BERNICE BROWN

CHAPTER XII

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CHAPTER XII

SALTONSTALL CABOT ADAMS was in no position to do anything more than stare. Sweetie stared too, her expression a provocative combination of amusement and something perhaps not so kindly.

"To think of seeing you here!" she remarked. "Well, as the saying is, the Japanese are an interesting little people."

"Miss O'Reilly."

"Reginald."

"My name" (of course it's a little difficult to be dignified lying flat on one's back, even if one were a Cabot Adams)—"my name is not——"

"Oh, of course, I remember. It's Le Roy."

"No, it's——"

She giggled. "How stupid. You're either the Prime Minister of Portugal or an admiral in the Swiss navy."

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Saltonstall Cabot Adams struggled into a sitting posture. "For God's sake, Miss O'Reilly, be reasonable."

Sweetie was human. "Don't agitate yourself, dearie." She sat down beside him. "You're in good company. None of these folks—" she indicated with a nod the rough lads who had taken command of the absent Mr. Harvey's motor boat—"is social register, but they're good stock. You can't tell what a couple of generations of money will do for them. Now, your folks started their nest egg by cheating the Indians. These boys—"

"Miss O'Reilly—" he was very earnest. "I haven't a doubt your friends are charming, delightful, perhaps a little abrupt"—he rubbed his shoulder—"but perfectly splendid Yale boys. But what are they doing here and where are we going and—for Lord's sake, don't lean up again that shoulder."

Sweetie drew herself away stiffly. "Beg pardon. I hadn't meant to presume on the informality of the occasion."

"Miss O'Reilly, don't misunderstand me—"

She smiled gently. "Oh, I don't." Then her expression relaxed into something that bordered kindness. "I know. The Swede fetched you a clip on

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the shoulder. Well, I'm sorry. I'm almost sorry I tried to get your goat. But you'll admit it was a golden opportunity after all the welfare work you and your family have done for me and the likes of me. It used to be a real treat for all of us little shop-girls to be herded out on our one Saturday-afternoon-off to a 'picnic' at your mother's place and be read a paper on 'Browning's Influence on the Aztecs' and another on the 'budget system,' when you're making eight-fifty a week."

Saltonstall Cabot Adams blushed. "I'm sorry, Miss O'Reilly. I can see now how little that must have benefited you in your chosen career of, say, rum running."

"Wrong again," said Sweetie. "Only the coarser natures go in for that sort of thing."

"Then what is it?"

She glanced up at the heavens. "'Last night the moon had a golden rim.' You don't get nothing out of me, except abuse. Here—" she took off her jacket and rolled it into a pillow—"lean your shoulder up against that. It'll be easier."

He looked at her. "You're very kind."

"Yes, I am," she snapped. "But here's where our conversation ends. If you're sensible you'll lay low

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and inconspicuous from this on." And to strengthen her point Sweetie moved away.

Meanwhile the rough lads, one of whom Sweetie had referred to as Swede, had the boat running rapidly, though by no means quietly. Valiantly she nosed into the heavy sea and she left a pathway of churning silver behind her. It was really rather beautiful, but no one noticed it.

"You're to put me ashore," said Pooch.

"When I get good an' ready," said the Swedish person. "We came out here to fetch something and we ain't fetched it yet."

Pooch squirmed. "I tell you it's dangerous."

"Who's there to be afraid of now we've shook the Scotchman?"

Pooch shrugged his shoulders. "You can't shake a Scotchman. He's probably stickin' to the side of this very boat now. I tell you there was something uncanny in the way he disappeared—or didn't. And the girl——"

"You're seein' things," interjected Doc, who was listening.

"I'm *not* seein' 'em. That's what makes me suspicious."

"Shut up," said the Swede. "We can't make no

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landing hereabouts, anyway." The Swede was a big man and he had a way of speaking with authority. "So we're goin' right on to where we started for."

Pooch bided his time, but he was not convinced. Meanwhile his eyes watched the figure that had been so casually stowed aboard. Eventually the figure stirred. He was all but suffocated by the sail cloth that had been wrapped around him. He was bruised and sore. He wasn't at all sure, either, what had happened. By some maneuvering he managed to peer out through a hole in the canvas. At first he could see nothing. Very cautiously he made himself free of the canvas. If they thought he was done for, so much the better. He would lie low until the time came. Then all at once Lacy's heart turned over with a jerk. There, huddled in a coat, close beside him, was someone with a rakish white turban.

"Connemara." He whispered it, but above the sound of the engine no one could hear him.

The figure in the turban started, but did not speak or turn her head.

"I—I thought you'd got away with McTish. Oh, I wish to God you had."

The figure beside him started again.

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Lacy stretched forth an aching, but would-be assuring, arm. "I could have sworn you went over the side with him just at the moment I was engaging these other vandals. You're not hurt?"

The figure shook her head without turning around.

"What a night!" said Lacy. "I like my adventure, but I like it toned down to the drawing-room pitch a bit more than this." He stopped. "And I don't care about having you mixed up in this either." Lacy had a way of masculine protectiveness that almost never failed to charm. The figure in the turban knew this technique was as old as Adam and also that it was only by some absurd floundering of chance that she was its recipient, but she experienced a strange and entirely pleasurable thrill.

Certainly she had a right to play this game a little longer. This gentleman knew a great many things she wanted to know, that she had a right to know. Besides which there was something curiously familiar about him. She hadn't seen his face, of course, but his voice and his manner were reminiscent.

"Would you care what happened to me?" the figure in the turban whispered.

"Care—" His voice indicated there was no word in English worthy of conveying the intensity of his

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emotion. "Of course I care, a great deal more than usual, so much more I'm getting a little disturbed about it. I've cared so many times before," he went on with agreeable candor, "that I can recognize all the symptoms. I'm no amateur *career*. I have cared in every capital in Europe."

"Really——"

"It's a compliment, of course, to be admired by one who comes with a record of taste and accomplishment behind him."

The figure in the turban cleared her throat. "There are two schools on that subject."

"Connemara——"

The figure did not move.

"I'm beginning to think I'm in earnest. I'm wishing we were both out of this. I'm wishing we were out somewhere on the plains of Kansas where there's a train once a day and the biggest excitement of the year is a church supper followed by stereopticon slides of the Holy Land."

"Don't be silly," said Aunt Celimena, who was really having a better time than she had had for years.

"I'm silly because I'm scared," said David Lacy. "Don't you know that's the way frightened people

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always act in fiction? Think of the noble heroes of the war jesting under shell fire. The more certain the death, the higher the grade of humor."

Aunt Celimena cleared her throat again. "How much more dangerous do you think our situation will have to become before the quality of a certain gentleman's levity becomes—shall we say, heightened?"

"Unkind," said Lacy, "but I laid myself open to it. It's difficult not to swat the easy balls hard, even though you put them out." He stopped. "I feel I shall be of service to you yet, though, before this little joy ride is over."

"I feel you have been already," said Aunt Celimena. Then she turned her face full upon him and by the palish light of an intermittent moon she studied his features with what might be considered ill-bred intenseness.

"My God!" said Lacy.

"Yes," she said, "I thought so. It *was* Auteuil. Your face comes back to me now, slowly, and completely lacking in pleasurable associations."

Lacy stared. "Your face doesn't come back to me at all, but I must say that the present sight is shorn of glamour."

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"Naturally you don't remember me," snapped Aunt Celimena. "You were not looking at me but at someone else."

"I always said I had a record for taste and discrimination," murmured Mr. Lacy.

"And now," said Aunt Celimena, "where is my niece?"

"Niece?"

"Connemara."

"Well, considerably safer than we are," said Mr. Lacy.

"What do you mean?"

"Why, since you're not she, she escaped with McTish."

"Who's McTish?"

"Oh, a man of parts," said Mr. Lacy noncommittally. "I think you'd like him, and with any luck we'll meet up with him again some time this night."

"Young man," said Aunt Celimena, "was it my niece's plan to be abducted by you this evening, or your own?"

"Or possibly a collaboration?" suggested Mr. Lacy.

"It will make considerable difference to me in the

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altering of a certain document." Her face was grim. "My lawyer, Mr. Brewster, is on board too."

"How prepared you are," murmured Mr. Lacy. "Do you always travel with one? Now if one gets a cinder in one's eye how convenient to have one's solicitor there to sue the railroad without interfering in any way with the journey."

"You're an absurd and irrelevant young man," said Aunt Celimena.

"I'm only a scared young man," said Mr. Lacy. "That's really true. I happen to know who these gentlemen are who are acting as crew on this purloined vessel and I happen to have a hunch about their destination. There is not perfect amity in their midst, which is our only hope of salvation. But in any event, this is destined to be a spirited journey."

"What, if I may ask, is our destination?" said Aunt Celimena.

"A ship at sea. A curious ship that has been a long way. It has come from the land of slow moving rivers, junks, and yellow-skinned sailors. Forests of exquisite beauty crowd down to the edge of the black rippled waters. Poisonous lilies grow upon its surface, flamingoes and mocking birds flash back and forth above their brief reflections. Black

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fishes with silver fins leap up like shadows on a wall and——”

“Beautiful,” said Aunt Celimena, “but unimportant.”

“You’re right,” said Lacy. “Well, that’s where the boat started from. It’s shy a lot of papers, decorated with official stamps, that other boats carry. It took it a long time to get here. No short cuts through the Panama, owing to the inquisitive nature of certain officials regarding the cargo.”

Aunt Celimena’s eyes opened wide. “How do you know?”

He shrugged his shoulders. “I’m just guessing.”

“Listen,” commanded Aunt Celimena. Two figures had come closer in the dimness.

Pooch and Swede were discoursing. “I tell you again you’re a fool to run for it,” said Pooch, “with all this party on board. The thing to do is to land somewhere and beat it.”

“Beat it,” retorted Swede sharply. “Don’t you know we’re as sunk now as we would be if we went through? Might as well die for a sheep’s a lamb, I always say.”

“Look here, I won’t stand for no rough play,” said Pooch uneasily.

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"Then look the other way if you're so sensitive. I mean to bring back what we started for. If it seems we got too many extraneous souls on board, why, there's ways of thinnin' out a passenger list." Swede paused and looked at his companion with opprobrium. "Don't be so durn delicate."

"It's sense I'm talking. I tell you it's dangerous." Pooch strained his eyes out to sea. "You know what I'm afraid of."

"Just the ghost of a Scotchman."

"If it was only a ghost," said Pooch, "I wouldn't be so particular. But I tell you there's no ghost about him. None whatever. I'm expecting to see his red head bob up on every wave. I tell you I know that pelican now. He's an old bird in the business. If I'd ever guessed he was going to be mixed up in the deal, I wouldn't have touched it, not for five times fifty thousand. An' that's flat. Say," he added thoughtfully, "you got any notion how he happened along so pat tonight? You an' Doc figgered you'd covered up your tracks pretty good, but this here don't look like blind luck, to me. Looks more like there's been a leak somewhere."

The Swede swore with heartiness and some inventiveness, yet Pooch, whose ears were keen in the

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face of danger, was sure he caught a note of apprehension in the other's tones. He whistled between his teeth shrilly.

"So-o-o—" he exclaimed. "There *was* a leak!"

"Leak," Swede said furiously, and spat. "Hell! He was the leak himself, the red-headed blankety-blank—" He improvised freely for half a minute, and then continued more quietly. "What'd you say to his holdin' down a job for more than six months with the Shanghai Line—in the old man's private office too. He only blew tonight. I got a message tippin' me off, from the Big Noise himself. It's the whole damn show busted wide open; that's how good a leak it is."

Mr. Pooch drew a long and painful breath, and swallowed hard, twice.

"An' you fool enough to still try to run for it," he said in frank disgust. "You ain't never been much loaded up with brains, Swede, an' that's certain. O' course," he added placatingly, "if you'd bumped off the Scotchman, that'd been different again. But with him loose, an' all this crew on board, we ain't going outside on no run tonight. Not us! You call Doc in on this. He's got a bean on him. He'll back me up."

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The Swede appeared reluctant, but somewhat impressed by this logic.

"Well-ll," he muttered, doubtfully. "You want to head back to the usual place, then, an' lay low till tomorrer night. That it?"

"You're right, that's it," Pooch said with decision, "an' damn quick, too."

Bennie Brown

CHAPTER XIII

By WALLACE IRWIN

CHAPTER XIII

CONNEMARA could swim; she'd learned when she was four years old and practiced every summer. While she had never reached the cup winning, near professional class, she handled herself in the water with such ease that "amphibious" was employed in her praising almost as often as "delicious" when in a very simple one-piece bathing suit she played in the Sound like a goldfish; a goldfish in a costly aquarium with castles and bridges and orchids, or even, to some observers, like an angel fish in the coral caverns of the southern seas.

But swimming in the sunlight in a one-piece suit and swimming in the dark in a tightish dress and high-heeled slippers are two different things. Instead of serving her as propellers, her legs seemed to be excess baggage.

"I don't know where we're going, but I'm on my

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way too," she said recklessly to McTish, when, after making a long, deep dive following his, she sped through the water and came up near him.

"Don't talk," he returned curtly, "and swim as quietly as you can."

It was very dark, and it was getting rough. McTish was on her right, and when she turned to look for him in the darkness, nasty little waves slapped her in the face. Still, she knew he was there, for talk as he might about swimming quietly, he was breathing like a grampus. And she could see a blob, less black—a little—than the night when she turned his way.

It was hard work to swim, impeded as she was. She stopped swimming, and, treading water, balancing herself in the waves as a real swimmer can, tried to kick off the silver slippers which so hampered her feet. But they were dancing slippers with complicated interlacing straps which, like the complications they had helped to weave, had first to be unfastened. McTish, she perceived indistinctly, was going past her. She gave up ridding herself of the slippers. They were a nuisance, but she could manage. The dress, however, was another matter and too great a burden.

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“McTish!” she called. “Wait!”

Treading water, she pushed up the belt which Sweetie had knotted so securely round her hips and managed to wriggle the whole thing off over her head, and let it go on the water.

“My new dress too,” she sighed.

It had been hard to do, and taken longer than she'd realized. She was getting cold. That McTish would leave her she had not dreamed, but, as in her new freedom she took long, powerful strokes, driving herself somewhere, she realized that he was not there. She was alone, alone in Long Island Sound, in the dark, in the middle of the night. She knew she should have been terrified, but after the preceding hours any peace, even a black and solitary peace, seemed grateful.

She did not feel the cold now, and swam easily for an hour, wondering with each stroke where it was taking her. The shore, she thought vaguely, could not be far ahead. Well, she was in no hurry; the shore when she reached it—if she did—would be just another problem. No place to go, no food, no clothes, no friends. And after this, anyone with whom she talked would be a friend or a policeman. No more chance acquaintances, please!

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What a goose she had been! Marrying either of them, or both of them for that matter, would have been preferable to this adventure, since it had got wet and dirty and rough and lonesome. It was probably the lonesomeness which Connemara minded most, and next the fruitlessness. She'd lost a home and a sapphire bracelet, probably her reputation, maybe, even yet, her life. And what had she gained? Only experience, and that of dubious quality.

If she'd had her nerve, she told herself, she'd have kept that fifty thousand and let Aunt Celimena's money go hang. Then she might have married or not as she pleased, or started a shop or a movement, or gone on the stage or made candies or batiks. She'd made a mess of it any way you took it. Even McTish had deserted her. Or had they just lost each other in the night?

She felt tired and turned over on her back to rest. Not a star, not a ray of light, and only the sound of water rushing past her ears, and the lap of little waves on her face. Was it very different from this when you died? Didn't you just see nothing, and hear nothing, and feel nothing? She was feeling very little, oh, very little!

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But she heard something. A small boat, probably a canoe by the muffled drip and swish, was coming near her. She heard low voices, on a basso grumble which carried distinctly. "Come, home, Bugle! That's a good boy!" And a heavy body splashed into the water. It began to swim. A curious stroke, thought Connemara, who knew all strokes by name. But this one she could not classify.

Connemara was as nearly frightened as she had ever been. The strange swimmer was coming nearer and nearer. What new terror was this night to hold? Whoever it was, was close beside her. She would float, and avoid any new encounter by attracting no attention. She was very tired, and unless she was sure it was a friend, she preferred to spend the rest of this night alone. Surely there was not much more of it.

Closer and closer the sound came. She took a long stroke, and the gurgling, puffing swimmer was upon her. That collision was a blessed thing, though not with man or woman. Wet fur brushed her shoulder, and the friend-seeking nose of a dog was thrust into her face.

"Nice boy!" she said quickly in a low voice, and awkwardly caressed him, meanwhile maintaining a

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precarious balance. The answer was a rumbling pleasant growl.

"Dear thing!" she whispered. "Home, Bugle, let's go home!"

For the first time since she had left the hampering peace of her aunt's house, where living had become so suddenly and completely complicated with hair and suitors and wills and working girls, Connemara felt she had a friend.

The dog swam along beside her. "Nice boy, good boy!" she murmured at intervals, and always in return there was the friendly little "Woof! Woof!"—if only the warp too were as well intentioned and kindly, thought Connemara, who, though never ostentatious in her display of wisdom or erudition, was acquainted with mottoes and classic quotations, however slightly.

On they swam. "Home, Bugle, home please!" pleaded Connemara. She slackened her stroke, and the dog stopped too. He began nosing about her shoulders, and she realized that he was seeking a tooth hold, whereby he might take her in his mouth and carry her home.

"Oh, Bugle, if you were a man, I'd marry you, dear, however you felt about it!" Bugle, unac-

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quainted with the plot, seemed to appreciate the compliment. For, though the gossamer *chemise du jour* which clung lankly to her shoulder blades offered no hospitality to his gallant teeth, when her arm was about his neck he started to swim again, and was making fair headway with his lovely burden, of whose bodily beauty he was unaware, though her sweetness of heart must have spoken to his nobility through her gentle voice and touch.

"No, no, Bugle dear," she addressed his woolly ear, "I cannot let you support me. I'm tired, but I can still paddle along," So she took her arm from his neck, and started once more to swim by his side.

But not for long. Bugle, like most successful heroes, had not undertaken his rescue till safety was in sight. For soon, on a downward stroke, her arm was entangled in seaweed.

"Land," she exclaimed, like Columbus and Cortez, "is near."

And, like Columbus and Cortez, she was right. She felt for bottom and touched it. It was a rough bottom, and a rocky one. How fortunate that she had been unable to shed the slippers which now protected her delicate feet.

"We never know, or at least not always, do we,

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Bugle, when our misfortunes are blessings!" Bugle, still swimming beside her, did not answer, but she felt that somewhere under the dark water he had wagged his prankish tail.

The water was only to her hipbones. It seemed quieter here and calmer. Bugle must have led her to a cove—one he knew, probably, and therefore a safe haven, for no such dog as this could have been developed in any but refined and respectable surroundings. Which shows how well Connemara knew the world.

There was a sputtering and shaking at her side. Bugle had stopped swimming and come to his feet. What a tall dog he was! His head was level with her waist. Even as she walked uncomfortably over the stones, Connemara speculated on the breed of this noble animal, for she was ever interested in the sciences, natural or applied, and in history, natural, personal, or private.

Shallower and shallower grew the water, nearer and nearer the shore and peace, at least until day broke all over anything. But until then she would sleep tranquilly on this strand of sandy beach, secure in the protection of a strong and chivalrous friend.

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But it wasn't a sandy shore; it was one of those interesting arrangements of slime, reeds, seaweed and small stones cleverly sharpened on three sides with which the north shore of Long Island is irrevocably bound.

Plowing through the slime of mud and clams, active and extinct, her knickers and chemise of apricot *siffle* bound with tourquoise, her silken silver stockings rolled just below her rosy dimpled knees, water dripping from her glorious cuprous tresses on her creamy marble back, Connemara must have presented a picture of appealing beauty had there been light and an eye to behold her. But, alas, there was neither. Only the soughing of summer winds, the lap of little black waves as the tide raced out to sea and the stout heart beating, beating beneath the shaggy coat which pressed her thigh, guiding her gently. Safely ashore, they shook themselves, as it were, by mutual consent. Then Bugle's sweet cold nose in her palm and his gentle "R-r-r" said as plainly as words of one syllable, "Come with me!"

Slowly he guided her a little way up the shore, slightly inland. Connemara walked carefully over the stones fearing a little to turn her ankle

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which, without costume or chaperone, might be awkward.

Bugle stopped and Connemara knew they had reached a destination.

"Here, Bugle?" inquired Connemara affectionately.

"R-r-r," replied Bugle distinctly, and lay down.

Sand! Soft and warm sand. The intelligent and thoughtful beast had surmised that she was in need of rest, and led her to what was probably the most comfortable place for miles around.

Connemara lay down beside him and snuggled close to his hide. By this time he was almost dry and, though still a little damp, was warmer than the girl he had decided to befriend.

In a few minutes Bugle was asleep.

Propped gracefully against him, Connemara would have slept too, but for the questions which raced inanely through her mind, just as though there were answers for them. Why had McTish left her, or had he? Who was Lacy? What happened after she left the ship, and why should any of it have happened? And oh, why, why had Aunt Celimena made such ridiculous conditions? It was all her fault, really.

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This thought was rather comforting, and, snuggling a little closer to Bugle, she fell asleep.

She was awakened by a gentle touch. Opening her eyes, she saw that it was nearly dawn. A grayish light, faintly suffused with pink, made visible the green bushes in whose shelter she had slept in a patch of sand. Then she saw Bugle and knew what had waked her.

Bugle was covering her up. He had realized that she was cold, this kindly and intelligent beast. . . . Beast? No, never—hero was a better word. Connemara was too young and too cold to reflect how often they are interchangeable.

“Angel!” She thus addressed Bugle, and he wagged his tail appreciatively in acknowledgment of her praise. But in a moment he was off again, having covered her carefully with something big and heavy, which felt very good.

Connemara huddled beneath it for a moment, and then sat up to see what it was.

An oilskin coat, and a very nice one. Not an old flung-away one which Bugle might have found in the bushes, but a clean, quite new one, which he had either dragged from a closet or someone had lent him, at his request, to cover her up.

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Connemara stood up to examine it. A good one indeed! Except, as she noticed a minute later, for a square patch which had been torn jaggedly out of one of the fronts.

Who was he? She wondered as she slipped the thing on. Tall, she knew that, for his coat flapped around her feet. Nice? She thrust her hand in his pocket. A clean handkerchief, large and of fine, pure linen. No monogram, no perfume, not even a laundry mark.

A pair of leather gloves. Worn, but very swanky. "Two pounds in Jarvis Street," computed Connemara, who knew her London—"that would be something like ten dollars before the exchange went down." He must be rich. Or frightfully extravagant. "We'd be very congenial," she thought.

Reaching into another pocket, her hand felt something hard, cylindrical, and smooth. She started to pull it out, then started back nervously. Perhaps it would hurt her. Dynamite was shaped like that. . . . And if it were dynamite it would explode as easily in the pocket as in her hand. She might as well get it over with. Gingerly she pulled it out. "Milk Chocolate!"

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Oh, what a man, what a man! Someway, somehow she'd find him. And she knew she'd adore him. And if she adored him, he'd just have to adore her. She opened the chocolate.

"But, oh, maybe he's married!" she thought as she bit into one of the beautiful, brown, round, life-sustaining slices. "And if he is——"

She didn't decide what she'd do then, for Bugle came crashing through the sage.

"Morning, old dear!" sang out Connemara, honestly delighted to see him again. At that thought she laughed out loud, for she had never seen him until that moment. And what an extraordinary-looking beast he was. Tall, and broad and big like a mastiff, but with short, curly hair, piebald black and white.

As he leaped toward her, she saw that he was bringing something more in his useful mouth. To her vague disappointment, it was not the morning paper, which he laid at her feet, but a huge and rather dirty bone.

And in spite of its slightly repulsive appearance, Connemara appreciated the tribute he had paid her. She stooped to pet him, to look into his fond hazel eyes and thank him properly.

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"You are probably the nicest dog that ever was," she estimated, "and undoubtedly the funniest looking. You look like—let me see—the biggest of all the Christmas tree dogs at Wanasak's department store, the kind that costs sixty-three dollars and nobody ever buys."

He must have understood her, for by the sad drooping of his head she knew that he was hurt. She leaned to take him in her arms and speak to him, heart to heart.

"Dear Bugle," she began, and stopped short. Tied neatly around his neck in a scrap of oilskin was a small package of surprisingly mysterious appearance.

"Shall I, Bugle?" she asked, all a-flutter with this new and sudden development in the plot. "Shall I open it?"

Bugle made it very plain that she should and smiled benevolently when she untied it from his neck. Kneeling before him, she turned the mysterious package aimlessly in her hands. The simple thing, the natural thing, would have been to untie it. But what if it should contain a human finger, or, worse still, a pair of ears?

However, since the first package she had opened

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had contained nothing more terrible than chocolate, she took heart. It might be breakfast bacon.

Bugle kept his experienced eyes on her as she unwrapped it. Inside was an envelope, carefully folded over; and inside that lay the fifty grand!

It couldn't be; she was dreaming; she was drunk. But she was neither. There it was. The fifty crisp one-thousand-dollar bills which that frightful creature had given her on the ferry one exciting evening, long, long ago! And there was no doubt, when she compared them closely, that the square scrap of oilskin exactly fitted the ragged gap in the coat she was wearing.

Connemara thought very fast, which she always did when she thought at all.

"We must bury this, Bugle," she said, and she knew she was right by the way he smiled and wagged his tail.

"Dig, Bugle! Dig deep, old dear!" cried she. But for an instant he failed to understand; then she scooped up a handful of earth and he caught her idea immediately. Taking over the job, he started digging a fine, deep trench.

"Perhaps his vocabulary isn't very large," mused Connemara, "and that's no doubt because he doesn't

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know the right sort of people. But he's intelligent without being pedantic. And that counts for a lot in a situation like this."

As she refolded the banknotes in their envelope and tied the last knot around the fateful package Bugle stepped aside to indicate that the hole was ready. She dropped the parcel in its little grave and together she and Bugle covered it with sand. Tamping it down with her little silver slipper—now, alas, so sadly soiled—she wondered when she could come safely back and get the money, and what she would do with it when she got it. Then. . . .

What was that? A twig crackled behind her. A branch rustled. A masculine throat, delicately baritone in its timbre, cleared itself tentatively.

Turning, she looked into a man's eyes—the nicest, clearest, cleanest, sweetest, manliest, bluest eyes she'd ever seen. She hadn't realized they were so blue last night.

"How—did you get here?" she asked faintly.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wallace Duvivier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping line for the last name.

CHAPTER XIV

By FRANK CRAVEN

CHAPTER XIV

LACY stood at the edge of the beach, looking at Connemara, who lay peeping out from under the much-too-large yellow oilskin.

"Where's McTish?" called Lacy.

"I don't know," replied Connemara weakly. "I lost him last night in the swim."

"I hope he's all right." Lacy frowned. "I have been up and down the shore for quite a stretch, and there isn't a sign of him."

"Is that all that interests you? You men certainly do stick together. Here you find me washed up on the beach with nothing to wear but a cold stiff, clammy raincoat. You could hardly call it a usual situation, and yet your first concern is McTish. I suppose my plight means nothing to you."

"Of course it does, but really the natural question was——"

"The natural question," interrupted Connemara,

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who suddenly realized she was getting a certain amount of warmth from this burst of indignation, "was to ask if I was comfortable, and if there wasn't something you could do for me." As a matter of fact, this was the first time it had occurred to her. Had Lacy been too solicitous of Connemara, the chances are she would herself have been concerned about McTish, even sent Lacy looking for him. The man who can guess them right can beat the races.

"Well, since you have shown me the right thing to do, is there?"

"Is there what, Mr. Gallant?"

"Anything I can do to assist you?"

"Well, you might tell me where I could get some clothes—dry ones."

"I have a small farm about five miles down the shore. If you think you have the strength, I can promise you not only clothes but food and drink."

"If I have the strength," repeated Connemara. "You are not suggesting walking, are you? Isn't there a team or a car we can use?" And the tone brought tears to Lacy's eyes.

"Not a chance. I'm sorry, but it's walk or stay here."

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"All right," Connemara sighed, "I suppose I'll be warmer walking, anyway. Just turn your back until I get this sailor's kimono draped around me—and by the way, I suppose this is yours."

Lacy blushed, although, of course, Connemara couldn't see him. He was rather nicely ingenuous at times for so experienced a young man. Finally Connemara was as well draped as she could be. "All right," she called. "I guess this will do. I'll make you walk ahead of me, and that will give me a little bit more privacy."

"Do you think you'll be able to walk five miles in those?" he asked, pointing to her muddy little silver slippers.

"Why not? I've danced more than twice that number and never thought much about it. If I can't stand them I can take them off, or at least the heels. Come on."

And so they started on their journey, Bugle at their heels, Connemara mincing along in her little high-heeled slippers, the slicker slapping at her legs like a wet sail, the once carefully wound and jaunty turban now slipped rakishly over to the side of her head, damp and grimy. And Lacy—the always immaculate Lacy, looking like nothing an outfitter

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of class would use as an ad for "the well-dressed man"—strode on in front, forging ahead one moment and then, as Connemara called out to him, shortening his stride to keep one respectful pace ahead of her.

As they trudged along, Connemara told her experiences and how she and McTish went over the side of the boat, and Lacy recounted the last dive of the *Bloody Nuisance* and the capture of the *Filomena* and her company.

"I got away because they thought I was knocked up so badly there wasn't any need of watching me," he wound up.

"Do you believe that Aunt Celimena's in danger?" Connemara asked anxiously.

"Well, of course, she has been safer," he admitted, "but there has been a split in policy between our friend Pooch and the Swede, so I fancy for the present—till tonight, anyhow, they won't take any definite steps one way or the other."

Now they walked on in silence. Lacy had led the way along the beach instead of taking the road, and they had come to a stretch of hard sand where they were able to synchronize their gait a little better. Connemara even drew level with Lacy and, slipping

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her arm through his, allowed herself to be almost towed.

"There is something I want to ask you," she said gravely. "Why did you send me that money by Bugle? You're not sure even now whether I am a crook or not, are you?" And then, as Lacy tried to stutter a reply, she continued: "Oh, you needn't protest, it doesn't matter—but feeling that way I'd like to know why you gave up the money."

"By the way, where is it?" he evaded.

"That's my secret and Bugle's," said Connemara, and she turned to call Bugle but he had disappeared. He may have felt that with Lacy's appearance his responsibility was at an end, and had quietly melted out of the picture like the gentleman he was. Maybe he had gone back to guard the treasure, or maybe he just had a date somewhere. Whatever it was his doggish fancy had turned to, he most certainly was nowhere to be seen.

"Bugle's gone," wailed Connemara.

"He's all right," assured Lacy. "Don't worry about him, he'll turn up some time."

"I hope so. I never had a chance to really thank him for all he did for me. I don't want him to think me ungrateful."

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"I'll explain it to him when I see him," said Lacy with a little laugh. That laugh was his mistake, for it brought Connemara right back to her topic. Too many men have made the mistake of laughing and appearing at ease when they thought they had a woman sidetracked from a topic, particularly when a woman develops a one-track mind.

"You haven't answered my question. Why did you give up the money?"

"Well," he faltered, "I am rather given to doing impulsive things. You can understand the feeling better than anyone, I should say. You know what the feeling is when——"

"You're wandering," she warned.

"Well, I'm puzzled about you—curious—so when Bugle came back to me after taking you the slicker, I staged a little experiment that ought to give me the answer to the puzzle of you."

"Go on," Connemara commanded.

"Well, you see"—Lacy was speaking very slowly and accusingly now—"I half believe you're that girl I met at Auteuil only— Well, it's all very confusing and improbable—all the Pooch and Sweetie and Doc business and their being so chummy with you, and especially handing over all

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that money to you. Oh, I feel like a rotter even saying this to you," he interrupted himself to exclaim in very real distress.

"So, thinking I am a crook, you sent the fifty thousand back to me. It was nice and generous of you—but why?"

"I told you I was impulsive."

"I should say so—fifty thousand dollars!"

"And yet there was a thought back of it all," he went on. "If you really were the girl of Auteuil, I was safe, wasn't I? And if you were mixed up with that gang against your will, there was a nice tidy little sum of money that you probably had as much right to as any of the rest of the gang. Any-way, it gave you a chance to break away, go some-where and——"

"Start all over again," Connemara finished for him. "Yes, for an impulsive act, it was very well thought out. Well, let's see how it works."

Sometimes the beach became very rocky, and then Lacy would turn to help her. At times she accepted his assistance and at others would draw herself up haughtily and wait for him to walk on. By the time they had reached their journey's end she would gladly have allowed him to carry her.

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Lacy's house was one of those old-fashioned houses which have been remodeled, and about which one is supposed to keep saying "How quaint!" Connemara eventually ran out of "How quaints." Yet it really was a picture, set in a little grove of pines which must have helped to make it nice and damp at times, but provided a charming background. However, pictures meant nothing to Connemara at this time, and Lacy was sensible enough to realize the fact.

"The first thing you'll want is a change of clothes and then a piping hot breakfast, and there, waiting for us, is the person who can furnish them both."

By this time they were walking up the roadway to the house, and standing in the doorway, looking at them over her glasses, was "Miss Liddy" Parker, Lacy's cook-housekeeper. No need to say she was New England, the "Liddy" established that fact even before two minutes of conversation.

"Good morning, Mrs. Parker. This is—a friend of mine. We are in something of a plight, and we can tell you about it later if you will do what you can to find some clothes for her and then something to eat."

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Mrs. Parker looked—and thought. Something was wrong, and should she allow herself to become involved? Who was this young woman, and why was she dressed in this manner? It was too unconventional. Mrs. Parker's life had never been that, and Mrs. Parker could see no reason why any other person's life should be. The pause became embarrassing.

"Don't you think you could find a dress of some sort for her?" Lacy was smiling sweetly and didn't seem as worried as he should have been. Mrs. Parker was a little reassured. In fact, she felt as though she could almost take a chance.

"I'll see what I can get her to wear," said Miss Liddy, "but I don't know what I can give you for breakfast. I ain't got a piece of pie in the house."

"Maybe you have some doughnuts, then, or we'd even take some poached eggs and toast and coffee as a substitute. As a matter of fact," went on Lacy, "I think some eggs held down with a nice piece of ham or some bacon would make an excellent substitute."

And so, after many questions which kept Connemara fencing for answers, Liddy Parker produced a not too badly fitting blue linen dress that belonged

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to her school-teacher daughter in Bayville, and then left Connemara to dress while she prepared breakfast.

Connemara found a broad blue ribbon belt, also the property of the absent daughter-teacher, and with it replaced the soiled and torn bandage with a turban so tightly and adeptly wound that Gloria Swanson would have immediately written for the recipe. Aside from the fact that she felt paralyzed from the hips down, Connemara was almost herself, but only food could have induced her to take another step.

Lacy was waiting for her at the breakfast table. The coffee and rolls and bacon and eggs were on the table. "Miss Liddy says she did have a pie," beamed Lacy, "so we will have that for dessert."

"How quaint!" said Connemara before she could stop herself.

Learning that there had been no word from McTish, and that no one around the place had seen him, Lacy after breakfast organized a small posse to move on to the hiding place of the *Filomena*. Before leaving however, he asked Connemara into the library and placed on the desk before her, three ten-dollar bills.

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Connemara looked at them and then at Lacy.
“Are you going to do a trick?”

“No—that’s car fare for you.”

“To where?”

“Home—that is, if you care to use it. I’m afraid the fifty ‘grand,’ as I believe it is called, would cause you some inconvenience—maybe trouble. This will simplify things for you. At three cents a mile it will take you some distance, and if I find you gone when I return I’ll understand. But if you are the girl at Auteuil, as I am pretty sure you are, Connemara, I am going to find you waiting for me to take you home, wherever that is, and introduce me to your family, including Aunt Celimena—who really ought to be very grateful to me if I rescue her from the Swede.”

And then without more words, or waiting to hear from her, he walked away and left her and the three ten-dollar bills where he had placed them. She heard him give Miss Liddy some farewell message—saw him enter a car in which there were four men, and once more she was left with a decision to make.

He had been very patient. She wondered if either Adams or Carrington would have been quite

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so patient. And then the past few hours flashed through her mind and she wondered how she would be able to explain to him when he returned all the jumble and tangle of wills and announcements, of drama, melodrama and farce that had been sandwiched into the brief time since her flight. Some night-lifer once said, "It's great to be crazy," but right then Connemara would have taken the negative. Certainly she had been crazy enough, and while it lasted she had had thrills galore, nice new exhilarating thrills, and they had left her with new problems to solve. Wouldn't it be much better for her—anyway, simpler—to take the bills in front of her and go back to Moorelands and whatever awaited her there? After all, wasn't that her fate? She was in the mood for punishment. She was so tired, she was ready to accept it. All her resistance was gone. She was ready to punish herself, so culpable did she feel. Almost in shame, she buried her head in her arms on the desk, and in that action all her troubles, worries, and problems ceased. The eyes closed and quicker than one can read she was asleep.

One would think, sleeping on such a troubled mind, she would dream of ships, pirates, million-

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dollar bills which would be changed into nickels and pennies, and having no pockets in her dress in which to put them, of jumping off boats and going down, down through a sea filled with all sorts of strange sea monsters dressed in slickers and wearing turbans. But Connemara was a most unusual girl and slept peacefully and almost comfortably. She never heard a step on the piazza outside.

The step was made on tiptoe, for a small, bedraggled figure, dressed in soiled white yachting flannels which hung in folds on it, was trying to make as little noise as possible. Not that it didn't want to waken Connemara, for after taking a look around to see that "the coast was clear," as they say in the drama, it reached in through the window and laid a hand on Connemara's shoulder.

"Wake up, for Pete's sake, Sister," said the shrill young voice of Sweetie in Connemara's ear. "You and me has got to have a talk private and uninterrupted."

Frank Craven.

CHAPTER XV

By RUBE GOLDBERG

CHAPTER XV

CONNEMARA rubbed her eyes, blinked a few times, and gazed at Sweetie. She waited for the rest of the motley crew to come up from behind. Sweetie, without Pooch and Doc and the Swede, seemed grotesquely unattached. The whole collection of savage beasts—there were millions of them dancing around in Connemara's brain—with their comic-opera accouterments, would come swarming into the room and start the thing all over again. Didn't they ever get tired of being rough? Why couldn't they sit down like regular people and read a book or work out a cross-word puzzle? Didn't villains ever take a vacation?

But Sweetie was alone. "Don't be alarmed, dearie," she reassured the startled girl at the desk, "I'm as much alone as a smallpox patient. You can't imagine how good it feels to get into a nice clean home where the most exciting event of the week is ice cream on Sunday."

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Connemara did not fall into the mood of Sweetie's opening speech, however. "How did you get here?" she asked, abruptly.

"Now don't get Ritzy, dearie"—here Sweetie put a hand on Connemara's shoulder. "I could tell you that I flew here on the wings of Opportunity or paddled over in March Antony's gondola. But I won't. You're one girl in a million, and I want you to be my friend if you will."

"Well?"

"Well, there's no mystery about my being here at all. When your classy gentleman friend escaped from the gang I simply did a slide-away myself and followed him. I surprised you, but you didn't surprise me. I saw him bring you here."

"Is that all you saw?"

"Well, I may have seen a few other things too, girlie. But don't get me wrong. I'm with you since I spilled the history of my life last night while I was transforming your nun's costume into a Fifth Avenue model with a few deft touches of my lily-white hands. Yes, I broadcasted a chapter of my early life and tipped off the cruel fact that an honest heart beats beneath these tattered rags." She made a mock gesture typifying the wronged

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working girl, but the next instant she was quite serious. "You've got something that I never had —*a chance*."

Connemara sat listening to this half-humorous, half-emotional outburst with a feeling of slowly-dawning guilt. Here she was, though at present slightly worn and down-at-the-heels from her unusual experiences of the last few hours, still a girl of culture with every opportunity to get the best that life had to give. Just a bath and a visit to her elaborate wardrobe and she would be a lady again.

But what about the girl before her? Where would Sweetie go? What friends would help her along the right path?

Before Connemara had a chance to assemble her thoughts into the proper words Sweetie resumed, "I'm coming clean with you, kid. I'm a bad girl and I admit it. While the going is good you get a certain kick out of doing something wrong and getting away with it. You never think of the future. You grab yourself off a little excitement and let it go at that. But when it starts to go against you, then you begin to think of papa and mama. That's what I'm doing now. The gang is about cooked and

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I want to get away. They'll all be in jail before they know it, and I don't want to go with them." Her eyes were glazed with a film of tears.

Connemara got up from her chair and impulsively slid her arm around the other girl's shoulders. There was a silence—the silence of feminine understanding—as they stood together.

"I'm just a selfish, good-for-nothing bobbed—" here Connemara checked herself. With a slight intake of breath she went on. "I'll take you to Moorelands and we can pretend you're my personal maid until the excitement dies down. Then you'll be free to go wherever you like."

Sweetie planted a resounding smack on the cheek of Connemara leaving a red spot to take the place of the rouge that had been overlooked in the latter's routine that morning. But Connemara had been brought back to stern reality with a jolt. One look at the ex-shop-girl's get-up and their plans seemed to totter. "Sweetie," she exclaimed, "do you realize I can't employ a personal maid who wears dilapidated flannel trousers—and ones that fit terribly at that?"

Glancing down with a giggle, Sweetie realized she was still wearing Lacy's much-abused suit which

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made her resemble her late gentlemen associates. "Sure, I must get rid of this hand-me-down. Here I am trying to stage a comeback in clothes that make me look like Captain Kidd's twin brother."

Connemara broke in, "There must be another collection of clothes upstairs in Mrs. Parker's room. That's where I got these. You know, she's the housekeeper and she's a terrible prude. We mustn't let her know you're in the house. If she finds out there are two of us here, she will think the Sultan of Turkey moved in with his whole harem."

Together the two tiptoed upstairs and proceeded to overhaul the poor, unsuspecting housekeeper's treasure of mid-Victorian wearing apparel. But just as Connemara was forcing the receptive Sweetie into one of those mutton-sleeved shirtwaists that give the wearer the appearance of an army scout balloon, footsteps were heard on the stairway. Connemara gathered up the litter of lace and calico on the floor, took a dive into the old-fashioned wardrobe and pulled the half-clad Sweetie in after her, closing the door just as Miss Liddy herself breezed into the room.

The two girls had just gone through a night of terrifying adventure, yet not one of those demoniac

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reprobates who had taken part in the nightmare of horror had scared them half as much as the prim little housekeeper who had come into their lives so recently.

But Liddy's visit was strangely uneventful. It was one of those little incidents that happen in the lives of middle-aged ladies of no particular worldly affiliations. For want of something better to do they go to their rooms, make sure the rooms are still there, and then walk out. Perhaps each room contains the imaginary child of an imaginary love. Who knows!

Anyway, Liddy left in a moment or two, and the girls emerged from the dark closet to complete Sweetie's transformation. Liddy continued on her way downstairs, where she engaged herself for the next hour or so in sweeping and dusting, and occasionally taking a sly look at her image in the mirror, giving herself the secret treat of a slight flirtation with the emotion of vanity.

Connemara and Sweetie dared not come down for fear of being put bodily out of the house. So they could do nothing but remain in Liddy's room and await developments. They did not have long to wait.

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Soon the hum of a motor could be heard, and a car drove up containing Mr. David Lacy, Mr. Brewster—the ever-present family lawyer—and a forlorn bundle of once-elegant heaving humanity that the bluebloods of Stamford were wont to hail as Aunt Celimena.

Lacy and his rescue party had had no trouble in locating the little inlet in which he had left the *Filomena* and her captors the night before, but though the motor boat was still visible, her sharp white nose now poked up into a mud bank left by the receding tide; she had appeared, from the bank above, to be entirely deserted.

Investigation however, disclosed the figures of Aunt Celimena and Mr. Brewster trussed up neatly and securely, and laid side by side in the cockpit, for all the world like two rather shapeless packages waiting for the expressman.

The Swede and his gang had taken prompt warning by the flight of Lacy and Sweetie, and had decamped for parts unknown—apparently taking Saltonstall Adams along, and leaving no addresses behind them.

Lacy and the lawyer carried the burden of tattered silks and shattered nerves that was Aunt

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Celimena into the house and upstairs to Miss Liddy's room, where they deposited it gently on the bed to the tune of its own grunts and groans delivered in perfect jazz time.

Connemara and her prospective maid, hearing them on the stairs, and not being able to think of anything more original to do in the brief moment of reflection allowed them, plunged back into the wardrobe and sank into the oblivion of mothball-scented darkness.

Miss Liddy took one look at the remnant on the bed, observing in her best unattached manner, "If a woman her age must drink, you'd think she'd have enough sense to have it analyzed first," and left the room. Liddy's whole life consisted principally of leaving rooms. It gave her some place to go.

Later, when Lacy demanded anxiously of her what had become of the young lady whom he had brought to the house that morning, she was stubbornly noncommittal.

"I guess she just evaporated like all bad things do eventually," she said deliberately, and the thin lips tightened.

With a muttered observation, Lacy went into the

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library and stared at the smooth surface of the big desk. The three ten-dollar bills were gone!

Aunt Celimena, meanwhile, lay upstairs on Mrs. Parker's bed and indulged in the enjoyment of her recently acquired aches and pains. As she felt each bruise where the ropes had bitten into her flesh while she was tied up like a common or garden variety of everyday pirate victim, she compared herself to Joan of Arc and a few of the other great martyrs of history. She wondered why her niece had gotten her into such an outlandish complication of weird events as had happened during the past twelve hours.

How could a girl with every reason to lead a normal and well-regulated life go so far astray as to get mixed up with smugglers, pirates, cave men, women of no reputation, and what not? And all perfect strangers!

Where would it all lead to? And where was Connemara at this very minute? Perhaps she had run off with a band of Russian bomb throwers. Maybe at this very second she was flying through the air astride a church steeple that had been pried loose from the mother building by a stick of dynamite. True, Connemara had red hair.

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But that was not an excuse for anything and everything.

With her throbbing pains beating in perfect rhythm to the horrible thoughts running through her tired brain, she dozed off into a slumber fraught with demons and goblins such as never before inhabited a nightmare.

Connemara in the wardrobe, in such close contact with the reformed Sweetie, even where their positions were equalized by the darkness and lack of air, still felt that aloofness that had been bred in her for many generations back. She wanted to help Sweetie, but in spite of that, she could not bring herself down to the other girl's level.

It flashed through her mind that maybe the fault was not entirely her own. Perhaps Sweetie was not altogether sincere in her desire to go straight. There seemed to be a small cloud, hardly perceptible, casting a shadow athwart their bond of understanding.

When the stuffiness of their cooped-up quarters became unbearable, they opened the door the fraction of an inch and were greatly relieved to see Aunt Celimena sprawled out on the bed writhing in the throes of a delirious battle with pirates and cor-

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sairs. The girls decided to risk a hasty but silent flight.

They opened the door and took one step. But a mass of the housekeeper's clothing had dropped to the floor during their imprisonment and entwined itself about their feet. They had no time to notice this trivial, but nevertheless important circumstance.

Fate has a way of creating a joke and then making it seem more laughable by creating another joke right on top of the first.

Connemara was slightly in the lead and as she started the second step in her flight toward the door her feet did not function at all. She tripped over the mass of clothing on the floor. Sweetie who was close behind and going at the same speed, also tripped. Fate did not overlook a thing in arranging this little performance. The bed upon which Aunt Celimena slept lay directly in the path of the two girls. They flopped down—*kerplunk*—squarely on top of the sleeper just as that estimable lady was being attacked by fifteen thousand buccaneers. She was suddenly awake, filled with a justifiable desire to fight for her life.

Sheer numbers finally decided the encounter and Aunt Celimena stood face to face with Connemara.

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Or, rather, she lay face to face with Connemara.

"My God, *Connemara!*" she screamed, in a tone of voice that should have awakened the ancient kings of Egypt, and fell back in a dead faint.

Sweetie crouched in the corner, rubbing a sore spot on her arm with three fresh ten-dollar bills.

Rube Toldeay

CHAPTER XVI

By GEORGE BARR McCUTCHEON

CHAPTER XVI

NOW Bing Carrington had two separate and not very distinct objects in going overboard, one quite indefinite, the other more or less definite. First, he went over the rail into the water because he couldn't very well help himself, which was indefinite, and secondly, he had a hazy idea about securing help for his comrades, an object that became commendably definite as he regained his senses. He experienced some difficulty with the long, cumbersome polo coat he had donned at the beginning of the chase in order to cover as well as possible the rather startling harlequin suit he had worn to the fancy dress party. He succeeded in shedding it, however, abandoning it to the waters of the Sound, a sacrifice made without the slightest compunction because he remembered that it did not belong to him at all but to Salt Adams, who had generously pressed it upon him when they started off in the motor.

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After swimming for some ten or fifteen minutes, swiftly but cautiously, he decided it was safe to make for the shore, which he could distinguish close at hand. Presently he found a footing among the rocks and was soon threading his way among the trees, bound he knew not whither, except that reason told him he was sure to come to a road shortly if he kept on in the direction he was going. He was wet and cold but determined. In due time, as he had suspected, he came to a macadam driveway. A short distance ahead he distinguished the black shadow of a house. For this he dashed without hesitation and mounting the broad steps to a capacious veranda, was soon pressing the door button and rattling the great iron knocker. The house was in complete darkness. After a long wait a light appeared in the hall and the door was opened by a partially clad manservant.

“May I use your telephone? Important. *Must* get the police at once,” chattered the amazing object that greeted the eyes of the servant. Bing was a thoroughly saturated, glistening visitor from an absolutely unknown world. He was a thing of many colors.

Before the blinking servant could muster the

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words to reply, or the strength to slam the door, a masculine voice called out from somewhere inside the house.

“Who’s there? What’s up?”

“God—God only knows, sir,” cried the servant.
“I never saw anything like——”

“I say,” bawled Carrington, manfully pushing his way into the hall—“I say, look here, where’s your telephone? Don’t come down. I must get hold of the police. Oh, hello! There you are. I didn’t mean to get you out of bed.”

A man fully dressed, was coming hurriedly down the stairs. He stopped about halfway down, and stared at the strange visitor.

“Well, for the love of Mike!”

“Where is it?”

“Where is what?”

“The telephone.”

“Oh, the telephone? It’s out of order. Isn’t working. Can’t get central or anything on it. But, who the devil are you and—what’s up? Accident?”

“You needn’t be afraid of me,” chattered Bing. Now, remembering what was said about the telephone, he added; “Did you say out of order?”

“I did. What do you want with the police? But

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first of all, can't I give you a nip of whiskey? You seem wet."

"Say that again, please," cried Bing, eagerly.

"You seem wet."

"I didn't mean that."

"Oh, I see. Henry, bring it into the library at once."

"I'll drip all over your rugs."

"Hang the rugs. No, that's what you do when you beat 'em. I don't know what you do when you wet 'em."

"Sorry to get you out of bed like this," apologized Bing, following the other down the hall, his feet squashing in a most lachrymose manner.

"Can't you see I've got all my clothes on?"

"Oh, excuse me. I didn't know but what perhaps you might have—ahem! Yes, as I was saying, there is no time to be lost."

"Now tell me all about it," said his host, a stout, middle-aged gentleman. Henry had returned.

Whereupon Bing, in as few words as possible, gave him a bald and discreetly incomplete story of his most recent adventure.

"My name is Merrill," announced his host, when Bing paused for obvious reasons. Mr. Merrill was

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evidently a man of action and resource. "Rum runners, that's what they are. Now, I have a brother, Bob Merrill—a good bit younger than I am. He's in the revenue service. That is to say, he's a sort of volunteer Secret Service man. Amateur sleuth, you know. Terribly keen about it. Simply delights in chasing smugglers, shooting at 'em, and all that sort of thing. Keeps his launch just off my landing. He's been out in the Sound tonight, roving around, looking for bad eggs. By bad eggs I mean smugggies. That's what he calls 'em, smugggies. I heard the launch come in half an hour or so ago and tie up to the buoy. So I suppose Bob's out there now. He sleeps on board these nights—ready for anything, you see. Now, I tell you what we'll do. We'll get a rowboat, paddle out there, and get him on the job. He'll run these confounded pirates to earth or sink 'em."

"Well, that would be the same thing as running them to earth, all right. I suppose there's earth at the bottom of the Sound."

"Lots of it. Largely protected by bottles. Come along. Let's be off. No time to lose. Ah, I beg your pardon. You must get into some dry clothes. Henry, take Mr. Carrington upstairs and—and dress

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him. Give him that gray checked suit of mine. Shirt, underclothes, and everything too. You certainly need a change, Mr. Carrington."

"Oh, I am perfectly warm now. Clear down to my toes."

"Well, I'll have another one waiting for you when you come down. About the same dose—or a trifle stiffer?"

"Suit yourself, Mr. Merrill," said Bing genially.

He followed Henry upstairs and in a very short time returned to the library, completely—or to be quite honest about it—rather incompletely attired in Mr. Merrill's gray checked suit. Bing was a tall, spare man, Merrill a short, pudgy one. It was a very fashionable suit of clothes, but it lacked cohesion when applied to Mr. Carrington's frame. The coat scarcely reached to the small of his back, there was a seven or eight inch gap between waist-coat and trousers, and nearly all of Mr. Merrill's white socks were exposed to view.

"You look fine," said Mr. Merrill approvingly. "Much better than you did a while ago."

Two minutes later they were hurrying down to the shore, and Henry was off to a neighbor's to telephone for the police. Coming to the end of the

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float, the two men stepped into a small boat and cast off, Merrill handling the oars. The tiny light of a launch could be seen a short distance out in the Sound, bobbing slightly in the swell. The oarsman had not taken five strokes, however, before he stopped and uttered a mild imprecation.

"That dog-goned dog!" he exclaimed, peering over his shoulder. "Hear him? Hear the racket he's making?"

"I thought perhaps you had a small auxiliary engine up there in front——"

"Not a bit of it. It's Bugle's tail. Stop that Bugle! Do you hear me, sir? Cut it out! You see, Mr. Carrington, on hot nights he comes down here and sleeps in this boat. He's a regular sea dog. Loves life on the ocean wave and all that sort of thing. He'd sing it if he could, wouldn't you, Bugle?"

Bugle rapped twice with his tail.

"He raps three times when he wants to say No," explained his master.

"What does he do when he doesn't want to commit himself?" inquired Bing, who was feeling very bland by this time.

"Simply holds his tail, that's all. But we can't

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have him along with us now. Get out, Bugle! Down with you. Go home!"

Bugle ignored the command. He refused to move anything but his tail. Mr. Merrill resumed his rowing.

"Oh, well—all right," he muttered. Now to his passenger: "Bob will find this boat you're talking about—the *Filomena*, did you say? And he'll make short work of the darned pirates. If they run for it, he'll put a couple of one-pounders into 'em, and sink 'em."

"Good Lord! He mustn't do that. He mustn't sink Aunt Celimena."

"I thought you said her name was Filomena."

"She isn't a boat. She's Connie's aunt. She's a lady."

"Fine! That will suit Bob. Lady in distress. He's got a pal named Lacy, Dave Lacy. Lives just a few miles down the shore. They're both keen about ladies in distress. Dave's got a boat called the *Bloody Nuisance*, and he's more or less in the service too, helping Bob whenever there's anything on. I mean when the smuggies have got anything on, not the ladies. No, hang it! I don't mean that either. You understand what I mean, Carrington.

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It's that blamed dog. He rattles me. Get out of this boat, Bugle! Home with you! Go home, Bugle! If you don't I'll rap you with one of these oars."

Bugle obligingly plunged overboard and started swimming toward the shore.

"I simply can't stand having that dog listening to everything I say," grumbled Mr. Merrill. "He's too darned smart for words."

A few minutes later the boat drew alongside the launch, and two men climbed aboard. Merrill routed his brother out of the cabin, and explanations followed.

"The first thing to do," said Bob Merrill briskly, "is to find out what's become of Lacy's *Bloody Nuisance*. We talked with him an hour or two ago, and everything was all right then. By gosh, there certainly has been action tonight, Mr. Carrington. I've heard guns popping all over the Sound like champagne corks at a bone-dry banquet."

They cruised for a short time without finding a sign of the *Filomena* or the *Bloody Nuisance*, but they did pick up an almost exhausted swimmer. He turned out to be a red-headed Scotchman named McTish. From him they learned of Connemara's

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escape from the *Bloody Nuisance* and her daring attempt to swim ashore, a distance of several miles; a feat McTish was confident she had accomplished, for he had followed some distance behind her for the better part of an hour. He spoke of her as the White Sister and explained his reason for appearing to have deserted her after they left the *Bloody Nuisance* together. He was more severely wounded in the fight than he wanted her to know, and purposely dropped behind because he knew he would be unable to swim fast enough to keep up with her, and something told him that if she mistrusted his plight she was woman enough to come to his rescue. He said he'd sooner drown than be saved by a woman. He'd been a bachelor for nearly sixty years and he'd be dashed if he'd let a woman save him if it was the last act of his life.

"I'll put you ashore, Mr. Carrington, and cruise around for a while myself," announced Bob Merrill. "You'd better get a doctor for this man, Charlie. Take him up to the house. He's all in. I have an idea the *Filomena* has made for some secret inlet and gone into hiding. Tell the cops to search along the shore for the young lady—that is, if you can get hold of the cops. You probably won't be able

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to find them till broad daylight, but, just the same, you might try. Telephone Dave Lacy's house and see if he's at home. He probably knows something about the *Bloody Nuisance* and if he doesn't, at least he ought to be given the latest about the girl."

Bing groaned. "But we don't know what the latest is. She may be at the bottom of the Sound. Oh, Lord!"

"That girl could swim clear around Long Island," announced McTish. "She ain't drowned."

"I think I'm going to have a chill," suggested Bing, with a glance at Mr. Merrill.

"Take this," said that gentleman promptly.

It was not until after breakfast the next morning that Bing set out for Lacy's house. He had breakfasted alone. Mr. Merrill was sleeping. They had not gone to bed until nearly four; what with the police, the telephone and other things. He realized that he did not present a personable appearance, but even so, Mr. Merrill's gray checked suit was much more suitable than the harlequin costume, which had shrunk to half its guaranteed size. Lacy himself admitted him. Mr. Carrington, noting the look of astonishment on the latter's face, hastily explained.

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"My name is Carrington, and these are not my clothes. Are you Mr. Lacy?"

"I am. Come in, Mr. Carrington. I've been hearing a lot about you. If you will just slip into the living room, straight ahead, that's right—I'll join you in a moment. I am wanted on the telephone."

Bing failed to notice the broad grin on Lacy's face as that young man darted nimbly through a near-by door. Blissfully unconscious of what was ahead of him, he strode into the living room upon Aunt Celimena, Connemara and Sweetie who were engaged in what appeared to be a rather heated controversy.

"I insist upon returning to Moorelands *at once*," Aunt Celimena was announcing with decision. "As for this young person you propose taking with us, the idea is—preposterous. I will never consent to it."

Sweetie directed a pathetic glance at Connemara that might have melted a heart of stone, and wisely said nothing.

"Then I won't go back either," Connemara retorted with a matching decisiveness. "Sweetie was kind to me when I needed a friend last night. You

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ought to be grateful to her, Aunt Celly. I thought," she added severely, "that you prided yourself on the fact that the Moores always paid their debts."

"Oh,—of course, if you take that attitude, there is nothing I can say," Aunt Celimena had begun, in a more yielding tone, when Connemara, glancing over her shoulder at a sound behind her, uttered a little shriek and sprang forward, her hands extended.

"Good gracious, is it really you, Bing?" she cried.

"Thank heaven!" ejaculated Aunt Celimena.

"Well, for the love of Pete!" exclaimed Sweetie, gazing at Mr. Merrill's gray checked suit, white socks, and a segment of one of his pink shirts.

"Connie!" shouted Bing joyously. "Alive and safe! Come to my——"

"Be careful, Bing!"

"Oh, for Heaven's sake, Connie, this is no time to be finicky. Aren't we engaged and—and all that? And aren't you glad to see me? I haven't slept a wink since——"

"Can I be dreaming? I was sure you went to the party as a harlequin in spotted tights. I could have sworn——"

"I know I must appear ludicrous in these——"

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"You're great!" exclaimed Sweetie warmly. "I never saw anything to beat it."

Bing turned a fiery red. "Have I the—ahem—honor of addressing Mr. Lacy's sister?" he growled.

"Would it make any difference to you if I wasn't his sister?"

"Yes it would," announced Bing sententiously—"a whole lot of difference."

"Well, anyhow, there are ladies present, so you'd better not say what you'd like to say. If you'll excuse me, I'll beat it upstairs. You'd better come along, ma'am. Three women's an awful crowd when there's only one man. Let's leave the happy young loves to themselves. The sooner they have it over with, the sooner we'll be able to get the hang of things."

"Things have happened so rapidly, so confusingly," began Aunt Celimena, "I don't know which way to turn."

"This way," advised Sweetie, pointing to the hall. "You turn right around this way to go straight upstairs; eyes left. Join me and you won't be seen by the world. Pretty slick, that, eh? I'll have to jot it down and sell it to the Marines."

"*Tell it to the Marines is the way the saying goes,*"

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mumbled Aunt Celimena, following Sweetie to the door.

"I know it but you can't tell the Marines anything, ma'am, and you can sell them the Pacific Ocean."

Left alone with Connemara, Bing at once proceeded to press his suit—or, rather, it was Mr. Merrill's suit. Connie, turning crimson, pushed him away. She had caught a glimpse of Lacy approaching from the hallway.

"Oh, I say, Connie," protested Bing. "We're all alone now. We're engaged, aren't we? Didn't you——"

"We are not engaged," she broke in quickly. Lacy was entering the room. "I don't know what you are talking about."

"Didn't you send Salt Adams a bunch of your hair, and wasn't that your way of letting me know you'd bobbed—Great Scott!" For the first time he had observed the blue ribbon bandeau. "You don't mean you're still keeping up that nonsense about covering your hair? It's the silliest thing I've ever—Look here, is it or *isn't* it?"

She continued to smile at him impishly, one finger patting the blue ribbon more securely in place.

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“Connie,” Bing began desperately, “I’m asking you to marry me.”

“In the presence of witnesses,” remarked Lacy dryly.

“The devil!” Bing gasped, whirling.

“The gentleman has just proposed to you,” said Lacy, addressing Connie. “It’s a question that calls for an answer, yes or no.”

“You’ll oblige me, sir, by keeping out of this,” exploded Bing angrily.

“Impossible,” said Lacy, without removing his gaze from Connie’s lovely face. There was a light in his eyes that could not be misinterpreted. Her own eyes wavered, and he had read something in their shining depths that gave him courage.

“Some other time, Bing,” murmured the girl. “Don’t hurry me.”

“That’s all right, old chap,” beamed Lacy, slightly exalted. “She’s already been through a lot of unpleasant things in the past few hours.”

“Yes—let’s change the subject,” cried Connemara, eagerly and gratefully. “Tell us all about yourself, Bing. Tell me the whole story. Aunt Celimena seems awfully vague about everything.”

“We might as well sit down,” said Lacy hospit-

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tably. He conducted Connemara to a comfortable davenport and sat down beside her.

"Well," began Bing, resignedly, and forthwith related the experiences of the night. He had seated himself in a morris chair some distance away. At the conclusion of his story he urged Connemara to tell him everything that had happened to her.

She arose. "No, Bing; I will tell it all to you when I have more time. I have work to do now. I must clear myself in Mr. Lacy's eyes. He believes I am mixed up in some way with that gang of smugglers. I cannot rest until I have placed that fifty thousand dollars in Mr. Bob Merrill's hands to be turned over to the government!"

"Fifty thousand what?" gasped Bing, as she started to leave the room.

"Bones," replied Lacy, following her.

"I hid the money down on the beach," she explained, hurriedly, "near the house where that funny-looking Bugle lives."

"I'll go with you, Connie," said Bing, springing to his feet. Stupefaction had held him rooted to the chair.

"See here, Carrington," said Lacy, surveying the late arrival with a critical, even pitying air; "you

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can't go running about in that awful suit of clothes. You're a sight, old man. I'll tell you what. We're about the same size. I'll fit you out with a suit of mine. Come along to my room with me. Don't go yet, please," to Connemara. "I'll be down in a minute or two and we'll go to the beach together while Mr. Carrington is changing his clothes. It's too far for you to walk there and back, so I'll get the roadster. We can park it at the Merrills' and cut through their place to the beach. By the way, you can use my razors too, Carrington, if you like. You certainly need a shave. So don't hurry. Take all the time you like. No doubt you'd like a bath. You——"

"I had a bath last night," said Bing surlily.

"The more the merrier," quoth the sparkling-eyed Lacy, slapping the other on the back. Then, grasping his arm, he hurried him upstairs, but not without a look of appeal to the girl below.

In an incredibly short space of time he rejoined her and they set out for the beach. But it was not until they had left the little green roadster in the Merrills' drive, and were on their way down to the water that either of them spoke.

"I've never forgotten you," Lacy said then, softly

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and abruptly, out of that long silence. "Ever since the day in Auteuil your face has haunted me. I've thought of nothing else. In my dreams——"

"Do you think I belong to the Swede's gang?" she interrupted darkly.

"Good heavens, no! You couldn't! You are an angel. Listen! I swear to you, Connemara, I've been in love with you ever since the day I first saw you. I've——"

"Hush! You mustn't say such things to me."

"You are blushing! And how lovely you are when the color spreads over—Oh, I say! By George! It has just occurred to me that you may think *I* am mixed up in this smuggling business. For Heaven's sake, you—you don't think that, do you?" He stopped short. His eyes were troubled.

"Of course I don't. How stupid of you!"

"Well, then, I repeat, I've been in love with you for months, Connemara. I—I wonder if you remember meeting me over there in France. I don't suppose I made the slightest impression on you then but——"

"I remember you very well," she interrupted demurely. "I have an excellent memory. Will it please

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you if I say I have never forgotten you, Mr. Lacy?"

He gulped. Then, in rather a daze: "And you are not in love with that chap back there or—or with anyone else?"

She smiled. "Don't hurry me so," she murmured. "Oh," she cried, in sudden confusion, and with no little relief, "there is the beach. Down there is where I hid the money. Come on, Mr. Lacy. We mustn't waste any time."

"I am trying not to," he exclaimed, as he hurried along after her flying figure. "Wait a second! Answer me, Connemara. Do you—do you love me?"

"I dug a hole in the sand and buried it over there by that piece of timber," she cried, breathlessly, her heart throbbing furiously.

"Tell me, have you ever thought of me since——"

"And I marked the spot with three clam shells. Yes—here they are."

She was down on her knees, scooping at the sand with nervous, eager hands.

He stood over her, looking down, not at the hole she was making, but at a small curl of soft auburn hair that had escaped from the bandeau's rigid cus-

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tody. Suddenly Connemara uttered a little cry, and lifted a very white young face.

"Oh, Mr. Lacy! The—the money isn't here! It's gone!"

George Barr McCutcheon

CHAPTER XVII
By GERALD MYGATT

CHAPTER XVII

THE cold muzzle of a revolver pressed itself against the aristocratic neck of Mr. Saltonstall Cabot Adams. A gruff voice spoke harshly.

"Now you count slow," it menaced. "You count all the way to five hundred, one count at a time, and if you know what's healthy for you you'll tick 'em off as slow as one of them there grandfather's clocks. Slower'n that, even. You just try to hurry the count and you'll earn yourself another nice wallop over the bean. D'ya want another? I'm askin' you."

Salt's head moved painfully in profound negation.

"A'right, then. You play the game, and when you get to five hundred you're your own boss. Get me? You can take that there bandage off your lamps and beat it."

"But the others?" Adams protested dully. "I tell you I can't leave them. How do I know——?"

"A lot of books could be wrote about what you

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don't know," snarled the voice. "But to ease your mind, if you got any, I'll slip you the straight dope. The others, if you mean the skinny dame and the pint-size old geezer, is entirely O. K. They ain't goin' to be hurt any more than you are—that's providin' you count that five hundred. You do what we say, and don't worry about no others. Get me? A'right—let's hear you start countin'."

Salt did exactly as he was bid. He strove to recall the leisurely measure of his own great-great-grandfather's timepiece, designed for an Adams by an Adam, and having recalled it he began, in a manner of speaking, to tick. It never occurred to him that this was an undignified procedure for a Salton-stall. His one controlling thought was a deep desire to avoid what Mr. Pooch had characterized as another nice wallop over the bean. He had had enough of being walloped over the bean. It had proved a form of massage of a most unsatisfactory nature.

In his boyhood Salt had many times rattled off five hundred by fives in gay games of hide and seek. Now he solemnly intoned his five hundred by ones; and when he reached the half-thousand mark it occurred to him to add another stately hundred for

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good measure. There are times when it pays to be on the safe side.

At last he cleared his throat. gingerly he reached for the bandage that darkened his vision. He lifted it almost timidly, for well he knew that Pooch's threats of wallops on the bean were not empty noth-
ingnesses. For a moment he blinked dazedly at the sudden brightness of the sunlight. Then, still blinking, he made out that he was standing alone in what seemed to be the center of an interminable forest of scrub oak, one of those endless pancake stretches of inhospitable trees, too large to mow and too small to hew, which the real-estate prospectuses of Long Island always tactfully ignore. Salt blinked some more; then he began to think.

It was still morning, of course. It must have been about dawn when he was blindfolded and marched away from that terrible boat. Since then he had been prodded, so it seemed, for many miles. Pooch had been one of the gang that so rudely jostled him; Pooch and Doc and the one they called Swede and two or three others. Now and then he had sensed the hard surface of a highway underfoot, and twice cars had actually brushed by him. He had thought of calling out, but had recollected in time the cere-

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mony of the wallop on the bean. Silence, he had learned, was a golden thing. He had been wheeled around with his back to each passing car. Perhaps that was why the drivers had not noticed his blind-fold and suspected something queer. Well, that didn't matter.

If it was still morning, as it must be, then the sun was in the east. He faced it. To the left somewhere must lie the Sound. He must bear north, and eventually he would come to something.

He started forcing his way through the brush. A ragged branch whipped his face and stung him. He put his hand instinctively to his cheek and winced at the touch. He remembered now. His face was bruised and cut; it felt stiff and funny when he tried to smile.

In ducking under the next branch he happened to glance at his feet. He jerked upright, stared at them. Merciful heavens! And he had totally forgotten it! The shoes he saw were not shoes at all; certainly they were not the type of footgear a gentleman would or could properly wear on a cross-country tour of a Long Island briar patch. They were soft and they were long and they were pointed, but most of all, in spite of the mud that caked them, they

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were of a glorious cardinal red. His eyes crawled in horror up his legs. They were snugly encased in bright red tights, silk tights, somewhat torn and also mud-stained, but glaringly, unmistakably red. The eyes of Saltonstall Cabot Adams widened in horror; his jaw sagged limp. Here he was in the middle of uncharted Long Island, without a penny—for he had no pocket—and without a friend, dressed for the day in the doublet and hose of an Elizabethan courtier, doublet and hose torn and mud-smeared, but recognizable to even the most untutored eye as the garments either of an escaped lunatic or of a fancy dress ball gone very wrong indeed.

Salt sat down weakly just where he was. Then he felt something bulky inside his shirt, fumbled for it with suddenly trembling hands, and slowly pulled out into the sunlight the long, shimmering coil of hair that had once graced the head of Connemara. He dangled it in front of him, looking at it unsteadily. He had kept that, at least, through all the fighting. His eye brightened, but his teeth closed together grimly. Find Connemara! That was it. What did anything else matter? He must find Connemara.

He leaped to his feet and started plunging through

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the brush, the long lock of auburn hair clutched in his right hand. He came upon the road so suddenly that he was halfway across it before he realized it was there. Even as he checked himself he saw a motorcycle coming toward him. He watched it fascinated. Then suddenly he recognized the broad-brimmed hat, the dark gray shirt, and the bright purple necktie of a trooper of the New York State Police.

Salt caught his breath. Then he grinned abruptly and in spite of himself. In the movies and in books, the thought flashed through his brain, the man who came along to save the day was always a member of the Royal Northwest Mounted. Well, here was the day being saved, and by the nearest thing to the Mounties that the forty-eight states have yet produced.

The trooper saw Salt as he came abreast of him and brought his machine to a slithering stop with an ominous grating of two outspread boots against the pavement. The newcomer stared a moment, in the manner of one who had momentarily forgotten his breeding, wriggling his motorcycle backward the while in that disconcerting fashion of a cop who desires converse and information.

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Presently the trooper spoke. "What's the big idea?" he asked. His tone gave Salt a sinking and definite impression that what the gentleman wanted to know was precisely what he had outlined, to wit: the nature of the big idea.

Now Saltonstall Cabot Adams, for one is a Saltonstall and a Cabot and an Adams however one's appearance may point to the contrary, had been ready to make something of a speech; not an address, exactly, but at least a dignified and rounded summary of his identity, the situation as it affected him, the situation as it affected the others who had been in his party—in short, the night's story. But looking into the trooper's cold blue eye he found himself stammering inconsequentially:

"I—I've been to a masquerade."

"Oh, is that so?" queried the other with a slight lifting of his eyebrows. "Where was this here, now, masquerade—on the mud flats?"

"Er—er—I tell you!"

"And do they have 'em in the morning now?" The trooper's voice changed. "Step out here, you," it commanded briskly, "and let's look you over."

Salt stepped.

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"What do you think you're dressed as?" the trooper barked.

"Why—why, as an Elizabethan gentleman."

"Lizzie who? Say, son, you look more like the devil. My God, to think I'd ever see a grown man in bright red tights!" The trooper began to smile. "I guess you don't look like you'd harm anybody—much. Roll home, buddy, and sleep it off. Rotten stuff you get nowadays, ain't it? Where do you live, anyway?"

Salt gulped. "Stamford, Connecticut," he said.

"Stamford—what? Way across the Sound?" The trooper started to laugh, but abruptly his eyes narrowed. "What's that you've got in your hand?" he demanded.

The young man held out the coil of auburn hair. His own face reddened as he did so.

"Say, what are you, anyway?" the trooper wanted to know. "Where did you get that? What's the big idea? There was a guy loose around here last year that stole women's hair. Say, now!" He leaped from his machine and with three swift double taps satisfied himself that Salt had no weapon concealed upon his person.

And then Saltonstall Cabot Adams began to plead.

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“She gave it to me,” he kept repeating. “I tell you she gave it to me. And we lost her and followed her in a boat, and there was a fight and I had to push her off in the mud——”

“You mean you pushed the young lady off in the mud?”

“No, the boat, I tell you. I pushed the boat off.”

“And then somebody bigger’n you pushed you off. Is that it?”

“Yes,” Salt lied desperately, “that’s it. We were all drunk, I guess. I just woke up a little while ago, back there in the woods.” The young man’s face was reddening even more deeply. In spite of his concern a voice of conscience shouted within him that he was speaking an untruth, and a louder voice of pride made him squirm internally because he, whose initials were S. C. A., was actually pleading with a menial. Still, anything was better than going to jail.

The policeman was studying him intently.

Tentatively Salt asked, “Which way is the Greenwich ferry? I’ll walk there. I can get across somehow.”

“H’m!” mused the trooper. “No, I guess you’re not worth takin’ up. You’re what I thought you

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were—just a harmless boob. The ferry's that way." He jerked his thumb over his shoulder. "And I'll bet you have a string of kids seven miles long behind you before you get there. Move your dogs, buddy, before I change my mind."

Salt moved. When he reached Bayville, hungry and tired and thirsty, but unconscious of it all because of the utter humiliation and wretchedness attendant upon the laughter and taunts and gibes that had followed his every step, he made for the farthest corner of the ferry pier. The sky was blue and the sun was bright and warm, the water danced with the care-free sparkle of a mellow summer's day. But Saltonstall Cabot Adams saw nothing of this. Aside from a hiding place and complete extinction, there was one thing and one only that he desired. He wanted a cigarette. He had none, and he could not bring himself to try to beg. Yes, he wanted a smoke. He would have given fifty dollars on the spot for that.

He had no idea where anybody was, and at the present moment he did not much care. He did not even know that his nine-mile pilgrimage had taken him past the very entrance gates of the house where Connemara and the rest of them had fallen together.

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But even that would have interested him little. In spite of his need for help, Salt had been in no mood to drop in at anybody's house. What he wanted now was to get home—and to his own proper clothes.

He did not even know that at that very moment he was missing a perfectly good ride in a perfectly good automobile.

Lacy and Connemara had returned rather soberly from their unsuccessful hunt for the buried fifty thousand, to find that Aunt Celimena, having regained that miraculous composure which is breathed into any right-minded woman by the accessibility of a dressing table and the presence of a mirror, had once more suddenly become her old self. The company recognized this by a certain lift of her eyebrows. It was a lift that Connemara knew well.

Said Aunt Celimena with decision: "We shall now go home."

"Suits me," said Sweetie, "as long as I stick with the party. Where's home?"

Aunt Celimena looked languidly past and through her interrupter.

"Mr. Lacy," she pursued, "will you tell me where I can secure a motor? I desire to take my niece

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back to Moorelands. If Constance Mary insists upon the presence of this"—she transfixed Sweetie with a glare—"of this young woman, I suppose I shall have to take her as well. And I want Bing to come, because I shall not sleep a wink tonight unless there is a man in the house."

"How about me?" David asked with a grin.
"Don't I qualify?"

Aunt Celimena bowed deeply. "You qualify, Mr. Lacy, but unless I mistake myself I just heard you say that you would be forced to leave us in order to go over some private matters with your friend McTish. I believe that's the name you mentioned."

"It's the name, all right," Lacy agreed. He hesitated, then turned to Connemara. "That sort of puts me in a hole," he said to the girl. "I really ought to check in on Mac. As the advertisements say, there's a reason. But don't for a minute think you've seen the last of me. In fact—and I might as well go on record in front of this charming group of witnesses—you're going to see so much of me that some day you're going to say, 'Dave, my dear, don't you really think a man and a woman ought to get away from each other for one day after forty years of married life, however happy those years—'"

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"Say!" yelped Sweetie and jammed her elbow into Connemara's side. "Didn't I tell you that guy was a fast worker? He begins where the others leave off."

"Is that so?" growled Bing. "Now listen here, Connemara——"

But the girl herself, who was staring blankly into David Lacy's burning eyes, suddenly laughed.

"And which way do you want me to do my hair?" she said.

"Any way," said Lacy. "Wear a pink wig, for all I care. By golly, you could wear a pink wig."

Aunt Celimena raised her hand. "That will do, Mr. Lacy. Perhaps you have never heard that personalities are seldom in good taste. If you will secure us a car——"

"I'll drive it," said Bing.

"And I'll oil it," said David. "I'll oil it and gas it and water it and dust it, and presently I'll follow it in a somewhat faster car—and after that I shall simply let the splendid discriminatory powers of Miss Moore do their natural work." Suddenly he wheeled to the girl, and his eyes grew soft. "Eventually, why not now?" he pleaded.

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"At the first sign of rain put on your chains," said Connemara solemnly.

Lacy grinned. "That one is aged in the wood," he returned. "Still, mother's the health doctor. Just the same, I'm going to be the lucky one in five. That's the insidious thing about me. And I know," he bowed, "that you'll accept no substitutes."

Connemara's eyes were twinkling. "Make good on the car," she said. "I'm asking the man who owns one."

"Good kid," said David Lacy warmly.

Ten minutes later Bing, his eyes surly, was driving one of Lacy's cars down the smooth road to the Bayville ferry. In the seat beside him sat Sweetie. Behind them huddled Aunt Celimena and her niece.

"Take that swaddling band off your head," snapped Aunt Celimena presently. "I don't like it. And it looks silly."

But Connemara only smiled. "Not yet," she said cryptically.

At the ferry house Aunt Celimena suddenly observed in a perfectly natural tone of voice: "Why, there's Saltonstall! Isn't that odd? Ask him in. Constance Mary."

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Connemara's eyes followed her aunt's. "Oh, merciful heavens!" she gasped. "Poor old Salt! I'd forgotten entirely that he was in fancy dress. Oh, Auntie, look how he's skulking along, as if he was ashamed of himself. Oh, I'm sorry for him!" A sudden twinkle flicked into her eyes. "No, I'm not. He's funny. He's the funniest thing I ever saw in all my life." And now she began to laugh.

"Look, there's Salt," announced Bing abruptly from the front seat. "Look, Connemara. I wonder how——"

"My goodness, Bing, are you color-blind?" Connemara gulped out. "Good Lord, for the last half mile I've been staring ahead at that red thing and thinking to myself, what a funny-looking gasoline pump! Oh, Bing, go over and grab him before he commits suicide or something."

Bing leaped out of the car, grasped the astounded Saltonstall by the arm, and led him back amid the chuckled plaudits of the ferry-house crowd.

"Oh, Mama," shrilled a tiny girl, "there's Little Red Riding Hood's daddy! Look, Mama."

A queue of admiring small boys swarmed after the red-clad young man in somewhat the manner of a tail escorting a flaring comet. "Get out," blared

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Bing at the small boys. They withdrew to a safe distance.

Then Sweetie spoke. "My Gawd," she breathed in awe, "if it isn't Archibald again! Say, Percy, I didn't really get them pants in the dark last night. Did you lose a bet on Harvard or are you really a chorus boy after all? I just adore chorus boys."

Said Salt harshly, "Shut up." Then his eyes found Connemara's. "Haven't you a blanket or a robe in the car?" he pleaded. "Oh, thank Heaven! Here—give it to me." He clutched at the proffered robe, flung it about his glistening redness and climbed stiffly into the automobile.

"I've had a rotten time," he announced wearily.

"Well, it hasn't been a strawberry festival for anybody," Connemara gently reproved him. "I'm glad you're all right, though."

"I assure you I'm very much all right," said Saltonstall Cabot Adams, to whom the enfolding blanket had completely restored his wonted dignity. "I'm not only all right, Connemara, but I have here"—he reached beneath his shirt and dramatically drew forth the shimmering auburn coil—"I have here your token of our engagement."

Bing snapped his head to the rear. "Don't be

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an ass," he growled. "I told you what that meant last night."

But Aunt Celimena spoke up. "Gentlemen, please," she protested. "We have all had too much. This is no time——"

"Once in a while you say a mouthful, Aunt Celly," agreed Connemara with a tired smile. "Besides this——"

"No more discussion, Constance Mary! Not, at least, while this terrible shadow of uncertainty hangs over us."

"Uncertainty?" Salt demanded. "What do you mean?"

"I mean exactly what I say. Those horrible men—and their fiendish associates!" Her lip curled just perceptibly in the direction of Sweetie. "I tell you I shall not sleep a wink until they are every one in jail. That is why I want Mr. Brewster and both Saltonstall and Bingham to remain with us at Moorelands tonight. I feel in my bones that something is going to happen."

Sweetie wheeled in her seat, faced the group in the rear of the car and deliberately winked.

"Us poor defenseless women!" she murmured. "Ain't it the truth?"

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From the ferry house came the shouted warning,
"All aboard!" Bing threw in the clutch and the
car moved slowly forward, toward Moorelands—
and the night that lay ahead.

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CHAPTER XVIII

By GEORGE AGNEW CHAMBERLAIN

CHAPTER XVIII

IT can be imagined that Moorelands, under its long virginal regency, had not been much given to indiscriminate hospitality. In spite of the outcrop of sporting blood in Aunt Celimena, she was still a victim of that high voltage New England reticence which senses a sort of violation in having unattached gentlemen sleeping on the place. As for the presence of Sweetie, that was simply more and worse of the same thing. Never would Aunt Celimena forget or forgive the shock of finding one of her sex wearing male attire, not in the simpering spirit of a fancy dress ball, but as if she gloried in its opportunities for unmajdenly display. Could the unwilling hostess have had her way, she would have locked Sweetie in the cellar.

Nevertheless, in spite of all the varieties of tension which troubled its inmates, the house finally settled

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down to an exaggerated calm. A palpitating stillness which was harder on the nerves than any amount of noise teased Connemara with the illusion of peace. Her common sense told her there was no reason whatever why sleep should not come swiftly to her exhausted body, and yet, for what seemed hours on end, sleep played around like a tormenting demon, always just out of reach of her snapping eyelids. She tried to calm herself by thinking how good it was to be safely back in her own room, and instantly her mind was more awake than ever. In all seriousness, she asked herself this double-barreled question: Was she back in her own room, or had she never been away?

Her thoughts began to race and presently became a jumble, a kaleidoscope with a thousand points of light blazing against the immovable seer background of Aunt Celimena. Never had that background changed. Pattering against it like the toy torpedoes of childhood on a wall, rained and burst all the events of her life. Ping! her first and only spanking. Pong! Auteuil, and David Lacy's handsome face, glowing for an instant in the blaze. Boom! and the strange marriage contract. Bang! and she an immaculate nun, stepping into a high-

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powered motor car of foreign make at the mercy of a strangely fascinating young man.

And yet there was one sweet interlude which lived in memory as an indubitable fact. Never would she forget the blessed relief of plunging into the black waters of the Sound, of squirming out of her new-made slip, and finding herself swimming freely in her silk undies, unafraid and unashamed. Before her had shone a pilot light, a head of hair as red as her own.

At the thought of hair, she sat erect and put up her hands to her head. The face of the New York barber leered before her, reminding her that whether she was awake or dreaming she still had a secret to keep. She tried to remember if she had locked her door. She arose, went to it, found that she had turned the key, and started to return to bed; but so dilated were the pupils of her wakeful eyes that she was arrested by the sight of the familiar objects in the room, coming toward her as if out of a mist. Impulsively she walked to the triple mirror and stood before it. How slim and virginal appeared the straight shaft of her body, shining through the filmy drapery of her sheerest chiffon nighty! It seemed so young, so unsullied, surely

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only in the tortured twistings of a disordered mind had it been exposed to the post-Volsteadian night life of Long Island Sound!

Gradually she perceived her uncovered head. What if she should, in the morning, open the door to her aunt or a tattling maid without remembering to guard her secret? There was a long linen runner on the bureau. She snatched it, bound it around her head, and tied a great butterfly bow above her brows. The confection, which looked like one of those wet-me-not bathing caps you see at Deauville, was almost as fetching as had been the turban before its ruin.

Her mind at rest, she slipped back into bed, drew the sheet up to her chin, and snuggled her face into the pillow. Now, cradled in the memories of her girlhood, soothed by contact with the homely objects she had known all her life—the ponderous mahogany furniture, the ancient hooked rug, her little four-posted bed with its fluted pillars, the patched quilt folded over its foot—she could believe she had never been through the torment of the foregoing night. In fact, its events seemed more than ever improbable. She closed her eyes sleepily, her lips curved in an adorable childlike smile, and she drew a contented

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sigh. The next instant she was again sitting rigidly erect, staring into the shadows of the room.

A sound only half heard can be more terrifying than a near-by explosion, and it was such a sound, faint and ominous as the ticking of a death watch in the wall, that had galvanized Connemara into a sitting posture. She held her breath and listened until her back ached, then she let her head down to the pillow and listened some more. Yes; she heard it again—a stealthy footstep in the hall or somewhere in the house below. Someone was striving so intently to walk noiselessly that the faint whisper of a footfall became surcharged with its own threat of disaster until it actually seemed to reverberate in Connie's ears.

Her impulse was to scream, but she suppressed it. In the first place, as the events of the last twenty-four hours had proved, she was not the kind to scream before she was hurt. In the second place, the thought came to her that perhaps only unnecessary scandal would arise from rousing the whole house. She was by nature innocent, and yet no fool. Her personally conducted tour of the Sound had brought in its train a certain amount of awakening of one sort and another. She had seen modern

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man fight with gats, butts, and iron bars; she had envisaged his primeval prototypes, grappling as savagely as wild beasts and battling with teeth, gouging knuckles, and stamping heel. But the one thing which had implanted a first mental hazard of fear within her was the look she had trapped in Mr. Pooch's glittering slits of eyes as they gorged themselves on her bared loveliness even while his groping hands were reaching for her throat.

Her first thought was to put more than a filmy chiffon nighty between herself and the world before she ventured out to meet it. Characteristically enough, she took it for granted that she would creep out, come what may, rather than lie shivering on a warm night with her head under the covers. She arose, went to a closet, and rummaged in its depths until her fingers encountered a mackintosh. She put it on over her night dress, buttoned it, stole softly to the door, unlocked it, and crept out along the wall. Instantly she felt something like a blown breath fly past her face. She just had time to flatten her back and her outflung hands against the wall when a tremendous Bang! resounded through the house.

Connemara never knew how long she stood im-

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mobile, scarcely daring to draw a breath, crucified against the wall. It seemed untold ages, but it was probably only about thirty seconds before she came to her senses and realized what had really happened. The opening of the door had created a draft from the open windows in her room and that draft had merely slammed the door shut with a bang. What an idiot she had been not to close it quietly behind her! In spite of the explanation, she remained quite still, counting her heart beats, and waiting for Salt, Bing, Mr. Brewster, Aunt Celimena, and Sweetie to emerge from their respective bedrooms.

To her amazement, no one came out to join her. The violent slamming of a door, closed by the wind, is not a half-heard sound, arousing breath-held speculation. Like the elevated trains that rattle by open tenement windows, it is so familiar that it often fails to arouse a near-by sleeper. That is what had happened in this case, and even if Salt and Bing had heard the crash, philosophic sloth would tell them the same door cannot slam shut twice. The burglar, or marauder, or worse, she had heard below would naturally reason along the same lines—namely, that there was nothing to worry about in the mere slamming of a door.

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Connemara realized that in silence—absolute silence—lay her one chance. She strove to still her heart beats and the infinitesimal rustling caused by the strained rise and fall of her agitated breast. She knew it was a game of sheer patience. If she could keep still long enough, the marauder, becoming reassured, would take heart from the fact that the inmates of the house were such sound or callous sleepers, and would presently proceed with whatever he had been doing.

Waiting became an agony, for she did not dare even to lower her arms, but in the end she had her reward. Someone was certainly moving about in the great hallway below—someone who had to make sure of his ground by much groping before each stealthy step. Connemara had read somewhere that only the swift are silent. Transforming the thought into action, she stepped boldly forward, laid her hand surely on the banister and passed swiftly down the stairs.

At their foot she halted. In spite of a pale shaft of light through one pane of the variegated fanlight, she could discern nothing in the black shadows on either side. But in that tense moment she learned that there are more than five senses. As surely as

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if she could see or feel it, she knew that a living, breathing body was crouched within ten feet of her nose. Again came the call to her nerves for utter quiet. Steadying herself against the newel post, she stood rigidly, her ears alert, her thin nostrils distended.

While she held her body under absolute control, she could not keep her mind from leaping into frenzied action. Her brain began to hum like a racing engine. What should she do? Ought she to scream? What if, when people rushed down and turned on a blaze of light, they should find her in a mackintosh, a nightie, and pink bare feet, face to face with Bing or Salt in their B. V. D.'s?—for she knew they had brought no pajamas. Suddenly her brain stopped racing and began to hum normally. She turned deadly calm. Her nostrils opened and closed, opened and closed. She had smelt a faint, familiar odor which could not have come from Salt, nor Bing, nor Lacy, nor Pooch, nor McTish—least of all from Aunt Celimena. It was the smell of face powder—cheap face powder.

Her thoughts turned to Sweetie, the guttersnipe whom she had befriended against all reason, and just as they did so her eyes perceived a small head

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silhouetted against the one live pane of the fan-light. Never had she seen a poise more packed with malevolence. It was like a cobra's head, rearing to strike.

But why this sudden and inexplicable change in Sweetie? And then, hard on the wonder, came a flash of illumination. The lost fifty thousand dollars! It was Sweetie who had removed the money from the hole Bugle had dug last night on the beach. Sweetie admitted that she had followed Lacy from the *Filomena* along the shore. It was not only possible, then, but probable that she had witnessed Connemara's impulsive act in burying the money.

From the level of the unseen shoulders two claw-like hands crept up into the light. They were quivering, evil, eager, as if already they were savoring the feel of the soft throat of an enemy. So it was to be woman to woman, thought Connemara grimly.

However, she did not wait to be attacked. Taking advantage of the momentary spotlight, she stepped forward and launched herself at Sweetie. She had hoped to pinion the girl's arms and at the same time carry her by sheer weight and the impetus of the onslaught to the floor, where she could gag her

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with a tassel and bind her with a rope from one of the old-fashioned portières. But she had counted out her chicken before it had begun to hatch. From the beginning, and especially when decked out in David's nattiest yachting clothes, Sweetie had seemed a pitifully frail figure, threatened with consumption. What, then, was Connemara's amazement to find she had embraced a whirling roll of barbed wire!

Quite aside from knowing even more ways of fighting than Connemara's eyes had sampled since the moment of leaving the Bayville ferry—how many years ago!—Sweetie brought into play a quiver full of poisoned darts in the form of a string of whispered epithets and exclamations so outrageously stupefying that as each one hit her ears Connemara could not help but wince with horror and stop to gasp, "Oh!"

This supersensitiveness all but cost her the battle, but fortunately for her, as the writhing bodies of the two girls twisted and turned up and down the length of the slippery runner rug which led to the front doorway, weight began to tell. Sweetie soon found she could waste none of her breath if she was to overcome or even to escape from her adversary. At no stage of the game had she refrained from

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using her teeth and nails, and now fury made her redouble her efforts. Such dirty tactics would long since have given her the victory had it not been for the chance which had led Connemara to put on the flexible armor plate of a heavy mackintosh rather than a flimsy kimono.

More than once she had reason to send up a breathless vow of thanks to the Providence which had guided her choice. She could feel sharp teeth sinking into her shoulder, pressing viciously, and then coming to a stop just short of pain or even a pinch. They warned her, however, to hold her adversary in an unbroken clinch if she would avoid losing a thumb or an ear.

Staggering with exhaustion the squirming mass of arms and legs had just reached the further end of the hall when it toppled and fell with Connemara on top. In all her life she had never known such an overwhelming surge of triumph. At last she had her enemy down. The Swede's gang would never see that money now. She planted her knees on Sweetie's chest, and clutching her wrists, strove to bring them together so that she might hold them for an instant with one hand while she reached for a portière cord with the other.

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"You pink-headed wart!" snarled Sweetie gaspingly. "You big red cow!"

Connemara was half stunned by the words. Were they spoken through chance, or by a wild guess, or because her head had become uncovered in the furious struggle? She raised searching fingers and found that the bathing-cap effect was still firmly in place. Sweetie asked no greater advantage of the gods of war than this instantaneous truce. She dragged both hands free. One she clapped over Connemara's mouth; the other she reached up to the great key of the front door and turned it. The door swung slightly open with a pathetic squeak.

As far back as Connemara could remember, it had always creaked that way. A cool draft of air laden with the odor of whiskey fanned her nostrils. She sensed some imminent danger more horrible than any that had gone before. The rough, iron fingers of a man encircled her throat and began slowly to tighten. She heard Doc's raucous voice whisper, "Gimme something, Sweetie, to tie her up. This dame has made trouble enough for a while."

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George Agnew Chamberlain". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "G" at the beginning.

CHAPTER XIX

By JOHN V. A. WEAVER

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SWEETIE moved quickly, flipped the belt from Connemara's raincoat, and thrust it into Doc's free hand. At the same time, she held out a decidedly grimy handkerchief. Connemara's reeling brain received another jolt. Chloroform!

"Use this," Sweetie was saying rapidly, "we don't want that hell-cat of an aunt she's got to come bouncin' down here with those other dumb eggs. This is just a little private party"—and she leered malevolently at Connemara.

The girl mustered her strength for one last desperate effort. A sickening-sweet odor stole into her nostrils. The pressure upon her windpipe was suddenly freed. She opened her mouth to gasp for the breath which would be expelled in a shriek—and found herself chewing upon the filthy piece of cambric. A strangled snicker shook her. Chloro-

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form—well, hardly. She recognized the odor now—"Quelques Fleurs"—and evidently Sweetie had earlier poured half a bottle upon it. Sweetie would. That was her idea of subtle attraction. Connemara was overcome by the weakness of relief.

Meanwhile Doc was taking advantage of her limpness to truss her hands neatly behind her back. Sweetie dragged a wicker chair up behind the helpless girl, and pushed her firmly into it. Then, with hands on hips, she stood, grimly humorous, surveying the victim.

Connemara gulped. Her throat ached from the choking, her pride was in tatters from the realization of how easily she had been put *hors de combat*, and the stale perfume was rapidly making her very ill. A large, round tear rolled from each lovely eye and slid quickly down each symmetrical cheek.

Sweetie, beholding the tears, suddenly exchanged her sardonic expression for one of pity. She leaned over, and with the sleeve of her own blouse gently wiped the tears away. Again Connemara was surprised by the complex character of this strange girl of another caste. Two minutes before, nails, teeth, and feet used frantically in a desperate struggle; and now—this genuine tenderness.

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She listened to what Sweetie was saying: "Don't you fret, dearie. As long as you keep still, nobody's goin' to hurt you. Why can't you mind your own business? That's the only reason you keep gettin' into jams. Some day you're goin' to get into some *real* trouble."

Connemara, ill as she was becoming, was still capable of a flash of amused wonder. So she hadn't yet been in any real trouble! No, of course not. Such events as those of the last twenty-four hours were mere everyday occurrences in the life of persons like Sweetie and her pleasant companions.

Sweetie continued staring at her thoughtfully. "Listen, Sister. You been pretty square with me. I bet I can trust you if you make a promise. Will you keep your trap shut if I take the hankie out of it? Nod your head if you mean yes."

Connemara's beturbaned head wagged violently up and down. Sweetie removed the gag.

Connemara used her first gasping breath to say, in a low tone, somewhat incoherent with an hysterical giggle, "Just for that I'm going to give you a bottle of *decent* perfume." Then, before Sweetie could interrupt, "You said I've been pretty square with you. What made you turn on me like this?"

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"What did you butt in and try to stop me leavin' for?" the other countered sullenly.

"Well—but you were sneaking off, and I don't understand—" Connemara searched her pseudo maid's face for some explanation.

What she saw in the pursed lips and the cold eyes renewed her apprehension. For, following the girl's glance, she took in the huge form of Doc, who was staring fixedly in the direction of the heavy shrubbery bordering the drive. There was everything in that alert tension, that gorillalike hunching of the shoulders, to bring the swift thought to her mind: "That 'real trouble' Sweetie was speaking about—this is it, this is it!"

Connemara turned so that she too could focus her gaze upon the dark, overgrown thicket. There—a ghostly figure. No—two! Crouching in the shadows, deathly still.

At a step behind her she jumped and stifled a scream. Twisting around, she beheld the unbeautiful visage of the Swede, who, paying scant attention to her, was grinning insolently at Sweetie. What could the return of this ham actor in the all-star cast forebode? She decided to attempt facetiousness.

"Dear, dear," she said, "how jolly! I was afraid

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I'd never have the pleasure of seeing your funny old face again."

The Swede vouchsafed her hardly a glance. "Shut your face," he growled, without, however, any malice in his voice. He was surveying the open front door as if a new plan were just forming in his mind.

"It's the fifty thousand, of course," drawled Connemara. "What a nice game we're having. Button, button, who's got the money? Sweetie found some way to send word to you, didn't she? I ought to have thought of that."

The Swede allowed himself another baleful grin. "You should get all worked up about that fifty grand. That's all safe and sound. But, gee—this is some swell dump, I'll tell the cock-eyed world. I think we ought to have a look inside."

He took a step toward the open door. In the same second Sweetie was upon him, clutching his wrist, spinning him around facing her. "You big boob!" she flung at him, "if brains was hooch, what you got is Bevo!"

The Swede jerked his arm angrily. "What's eatin' you? I just thought we might go in and look around—you never can tell——"

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Sweetie strengthened her hold upon his arm. "And I used to think 'sap' meant somethin' in a tree," came her scornful insistence. "We got the dough, ain't we? What more do we want? That house is full of people. We got to make our get-away quick."

"Well," began the Swede, "maybe you're right, but I just thought——"

"The next time you start to think—don't," Sweetie finished scathingly. "Come on, Doc. Let's pull our freight. Poochie ain't in on this, I take it. He's a great one for dodgin' the rough stuff. A'wri, we'll be on our way."

Grumbling under his breath, the Swede turned toward the steps, when Doc stepped violently back, with a savage "Hell!"

Connemara's heart leaped with a thrill as the two shadows in the shrubbery suddenly took on clear outlines and stepped full into the moonlight. One was short and stocky, the other tall and graceful. In the hand of each something silvery glistened.

Then a voice that Connemara had last heard as she was struggling to kick off a pair of silver slippers in the dark waters of Long Island Sound grated upon the air: "Stick up your arrms! Stick 'em up!

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Or maybe the twa o' ye'd like to get shot full o' nice leetle round holes?"

"McTish," Connemara whispered, on a rising hysterical note.

"I told you so, you poor fish," snapped Sweetie, promptly elevating her hands, and turning at the same time to blast the Swede with fury. But in that moment, with an agility which startled Connemara almost out of her wits, the big blond Swede had stooped behind the wicker chair in which she was helplessly bound, and was dragging her, chair and all, toward the open door of the house.

"Go on and shoot," he yelled, mockingly. "Maybe you could miss her!"

Connemara heard a howl of rage from the small man on the gravel drive, a rush of feet; then she found herself, still with her hands bound, sprawled halfway inside the doorway, the wicker chair-back weighing down the back of her neck, and her face smothered in the hall rug. The flop of the Swede's flat-iron shoes diminished. A window was flung up, and she knew that he had leaped out.

As she fought to right herself, she heard the noises of unmistakable conflict upon the porch. Why

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didn't McTish shoot? But of course—he was afraid of hitting her. And already the Swede must be creeping through the bushes; at any moment he would hurl himself from the rear upon the two unwitting rescuers.

With desperate heave she toppled the wicker chair from her back and rolled over facing the porch. One glance took in the situation. Scarcely a yard from her, Doc and the slim, tall man were locked in what looked like some new dance step—only there was a silent grimness about the dance which froze her blood. McTish, holding out his revolver, was leaping ridiculously about the locked figures, obviously unable to make a decision between keeping Sweetie covered with the gun and bringing it down upon Doc's head. Sweetie, meanwhile, with infinitesimal steps was edging toward the very doorway through which the Swede had escaped, and within which Connemara was sprawled.

Then it happened.

“Look out!” Connemara shrieked. But already the Swede, like a gigantic rug thrown by an invisible hand, had sailed out of the darkness and completely enveloped McTish. Down they went. And at the thud Sweetie dashed for the doorway.

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Connemara kicked out. Sweetie, brought up sharply in mid-flight, yelled, "Gawd! My shin!" and her whole body fell across Connemara's chest. Connemara collapsed limply, but even as she felt that the breath would never return to her lungs, a voice inside her head kept insisting, "You must hang on! You must!"

Sweetie was losing no time in regaining her feet. Shaken though she was by her fall, she managed to grasp the chair, and had already pulled herself up to a standing position, one foot upon Connemara's shoulder, the other close by the prostrate girl's nose.

"Now she's going to dash through the door! Stop her," flashed that new, insistent command through Connemara's brain. Her answering action was purely automatic. She was a lady—all well and good. But there are times when being ladylike has its disadvantages. What would Saltonstall Cabot Adams, heir of all the codfish kings, have said if he could have seen his Cayenne Fairy suddenly dart her head in the direction of Sweetie's foot, and sink her practically incomparable teeth into that young woman's plump calf?

Speculation upon such a question is idle. Nor

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shall it be recorded here what Sweetie, stricken with anguish, announced in a loud voice to high heaven. Backward she tumbled, and again Connemara received the whole weight of a one-hundred-and-thirty-pound girl across her diaphragm. And this time blackness followed. For (she will never know in what manner) not only Sweetie, but Swede and McTish, Lacy and Doc, as if by some prearranged signal, tripped over the two recumbent females, and formed one of those quaint masses of humanity known to youngsters as a "niggerpile."

To the eternal credit of her red hair be it written that, upon opening her eyes some five minutes later she did not utter those time-honored words, "Where am I?" What she said was, "Well, for cryin' out loud!"—a phrase which her Aunt Celimena would have recognized as a euphemism. It was an exclamation denoting surprise; a surprise not due to the vision of Salt and Bing, in bathrobes, now on the scene and engaged in an apparently violent altercation with the red-headed McTish not far away; nor to the sight of Sweetie, binding the familiar perfumed handkerchief around her own calf and weeping gently the while; nor, again, was it a purple and swelling eye, staring anxiously at her from a foot

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away, an eye whose pleasant twinkling had captured considerable of her interest when she had first climbed into a strange motor car many hours before. No, what startled her was the fact that the owner of the eye was encircling her waist with strong tenderness, and his voice was whispering, "Sweetheart, Sweetheart!"

She found the sensation singularly pleasurable. Why hadn't she fought down the impulse to cry out? Too late. For Lacy, reddening, started back, relaxed his hold upon her waist, and burbled, "Oh, Lord, I was afraid— Thank Heaven, you're all right!"

She sat up, felt herself gingerly, then smiled coolly. "Quite all right, thank you."

Quickly she got to her feet, serene despite the consciousness that there would be, before many minutes, numerous painful spots upon her ribs which would take on the color of Lacy's eye. What a peach he was! And so fearless. And so very strong! That steel arm of his about her waist—

But this was not yet the time for sentimentality. The fifty thousand—that must be accounted for first. She turned to McTish.

"You didn't find the money on those men, did

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you?" she asked. Her glance strayed past him and scrutinized the shadows of the porch curiously. "Why—why, where are they? The Swede, I mean, and Doc. Oh, McTish," she wailed, "they didn't get away after all?"

"They did thot," the diminutive Scotsman growled in disgust. "These gentlemen"—a nod indicated the bathrobed figures at his side—"heard the noise, an' figured maybe they might be needed. So they cam' doon, juist in time to mix up in that wedge in the doorway, wi' the result that when things quieted doon a bit, an' somebody had presence o' mind to strike a light, Mr. Lacy, here, was holdin' on to yon Adams feller, an' Mr. Carrington had me in a clinch, an' the gang was gane—clean. Naturally. An' a pretty endin' for twa nictts o' harrd worrk."

He glared at the unlucky Bing and Salt, whose unasked assistance had so unexpectedly and neatly defeated his careful planning.

"An' the fifty thousand's gane too," he added drearily. "We'll never see a ha'penny o't now. We'd 'a' had that an' the gang likewise if busybodies 'd only kept their hands aff. It wasn't harrd to figure out if Sweetie an' the money was baith

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in the house the nicht, the rest o' the creatures'd be hangin' roond somewherees."

"It's too bad," Connemara murmured consolingly, trying not to giggle. "Still, I'm not so sure it's such a bad thing for us they did make a get-away. We've all been mixed up in some pretty queer proceedings, I'm afraid, and Aunt Celimena would just naturally have died if we'd appeared on the front page of the morning papers. As for the money, you leave that to me. I've a sort of hunch——"

She walked over and held out her hand to the weeping Sweetie, who promptly slapped it away.

"Teeth like a darn fox terrier," she sobbed, and continued to rub her wounded leg.

Connemara again reached out her hand, and this time pulled the other girl to her feet. "I'm so sorry —truly, I am. But I just had to. Now—come in here, won't you, for a minute?"

Brushing her tears from her eyes, Sweetie reluctantly followed Connemara within the moonlit sitting room. "What a fine can of oil I turned out to be," she muttered. "To let a soft little social dame put it over on me."

"Don't feel so badly," Connemara smiled, "I didn't play fair. How could you know I'd bite you?" She

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put a hand on the girl's shoulder and patted her gently. Then a hard note came into her voice. "It's no use, you know. Hand it over, please."

Sweetie stared long into Connemara's face. The defiance of her expression gave way to defeat, then to hopelessness. "Yeh, all I get is the wreath of hand-painted raspberries." Shrugging her shoulders, she reached inside her blouse and hauled out the crumpled packet of banknotes.

"Take the damn stuff," she said, bitterly, "and a lot of good I hope it does you. Now what? The bulls?"

Connemara smiled winningly. "Bulls? You mean the police? Oh, no, Sweetie. What have they got to do with it? I haven't an idea who really owns this money. If it's yours, I'll give it back when you prove it. Meanwhile—we'll just keep still and watch."

"Oh, well," answered Sweetie, "who cares? Naw, it ain't mine. And if it interests you any, I'll tell you I'm glad to see the last of it."

"Poor kid," said Connemara, and once more she patted Sweetie's shoulder. "I like you—a lot. I want to have a talk with you later. Don't you get terribly sick of this sort of life?"

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"Aw, for the love of Mike—don't bother about me. I ain't worth it." Nevertheless, with a quick movement, she grasped Connemara's hand and pressed it. "You're a damn good egg yourself."

"Well, what's up?" came Lacy's voice from the doorway. "Find the money?"

Connemara did not hesitate. Her eyelashes flickered slightly in signal to Sweetie as she answered cheerfully, "Um-h'mm, wasn't it bright of me? I must be losing what little mind I have. It's been right where I—I put it, all the time. You just forget what I dreamed about burying it, won't you?"

"Fine," Lacy said imperturbably, but his eyes looked straight into hers with a quick little glow of admiration. "And now, Miss-er, Sweetie, McTish seems to have something he wants to say to you out on the porch."

"Yeh?" Sweetie snickered. "Well, pardon me for livin'." Then to Connemara, "Holler if he gets fresh." She walked sedately out of the room.

"Snap on the lights," Connemara called after her, but Sweetie was already past the switch.

"Never mind the lights," Lacy spoke softly. He advanced to where the slim figure stood, her face

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lifted slightly in the blue glow of the moonlight.
“Connemara——”

Connemara discovered suddenly that she was trembling. There was that in his voice, in the mere saying of her name, that was like little hands caressing her. This must stop. A man she had known for five minutes two years ago, and rather well—she had to admit that—for the twenty-four hours just past. Still, you couldn’t call that time enough to— Or could you?

Who was he? *What* was he? And what right had he to do such things to her with that caress in his voice? She mustered up her old ally, facetiousness. “What a pity you don’t make the stage your career.”

But he shattered her silly defense efficiently. “Darling,” he whispered. “You darling.”

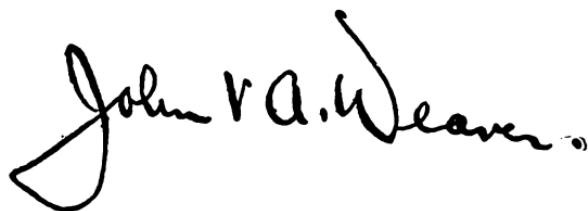
His hands were reaching for her. In a moment he would take her in his arms. . . . How to escape? Then, all at once she knew. She didn’t want to escape.

“But—but—but I’m engaged,” she stammered weakly.

“You bet your life you are!” Lacy exclaimed. Whatever else he may have meant to do or say was

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cut short by a blood-curdling shriek. With a thud remarkably reminiscent of that made by a sack of potatoes cast into a wagon, Aunt Celimena sat heavily down upon the top stair, and slid unceremoniously down upon them.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John V A. Weaver". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "John" on the first line, "V A." on the second line, and "Weaver" on the third line.

CHAPTER XX

By GEORGE PALMER PUTNAM

CHAPTER XX

HALFWAY down the stairs, Aunt Celimena caught at the banisters, staying her erratic progress hallward, and rose to her feet. Anyone but Aunt Celimena would have been shaken by the sudden pitching forward into the darkness, but that good lady, after the briefest instant of pause to regain her breath, was once more in command of her dignity. Clutching her dressing gown about her, she dominated, by sheer will power, the strange assembly, half grouped in the front hall of Moorelands, and half overflowing upon the broad porch.

"Connemara," she called. "Will you be good enough to come and tell me what this is all about?"

Instead of answering, however, that young lady voiced an observation of her own.

"And now see who's here! The faithful family lawyer himself, completing the cast of our mellow melodrama." Connemara was on the crest again,

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her strenuous experiences, apparently even her bruises, for the moment forgotten.

Her sally followed the sudden appearance of Adam Brewster descending in Aunt Celimena's wake, the only one of the gathering who was conventionally clad.

"That, my dear, will do," Aunt Celimena spoke grimly. "Naturally Mr. Brewster heard the extraordinary commotion going on downstairs and came to our assistance. Did you expect anyone to sleep through it?"

Her glance took in with deliberation the group below her, one by one, until it rested upon Sweetie in the doorway.

"Were they burglars, or this—this young person's recent associates?" she demanded. "You may remember that I warned you, Constance Mary, what would certainly be the result of bringing her into the house."

Sweetie took the accusation with entire equanimity. Tilting her snub nose to an angle even more acute than nature intended, she grinned impudently into the disapproving eyes of the lady who had thus libeled her, and shrugged her shoulders. It was Aunt Celimena who looked away first.

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"I think," she said, to Mr. Brewster behind her, "that there are a number of matters that need explaining—*at once*."

The lawyer murmured an eager assent. From his expression it was clear that he very much doubted the ability of a number of people to explain—satisfactorily—a number of things, but he charitably refrained from putting this doubt into words.

Aunt Celimena walked calmly down the remaining stairs, and seated herself on one of the straight-backed chairs that flanked the hall mirror. Mr. Brewster, after a moment of hesitation, took the other. It was not his custom to sit while there were ladies standing, but to be waked suddenly in the middle of the night, by such sounds as those which had reached him through his open window, had proved exceedingly unnerving—particularly on top of the unprecedented series of adventures that had occupied the previous day and night.

It was McTish who broke the awkward little pause that followed.

"It's no to be wandered at that ye're a bit upset, ma'am," he said sympathetically. "It's been some-thin' of a strain even for mysel', that's been in the service a lang while. But I dinna think I ever laid

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a trap for smugglers afore that caught so many extraneous folks in it." He waved his hand to include his entire audience, ending with a forefinger pointed significantly at Sweetie. "With one exception."

"We must get all this straightened out in orderly fashion. From what you have explained," Aunt Celimena addressed herself to McTish, "it is now clear to me that you are a United States Revenue officer. Were those—those people last night, connected with rum running—if that is what it is called? Please continue with what you were saying."

"No, ma'am, those birrds don't touch liquor; it's opium they trade in," McTish said bluntly.

Aunt Celimena caught her breath in a gasp of horror.

"*Opium!*" she whispered painfully. The very word was an offense against all the traditions in which she had been bred. It called up vague visions of evil-smelling dens filled with Chinese cut-throats, incense, heathen idols, and unspeakable people sunk to the lowest dregs of humanity.

She looked at McTish almost pleadingly, upon which that gentleman, with some additions on the part of David Lacy, outlined what lay behind the

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strange adventures of the past twenty-four hours.

"This gang, noo, the Swede's, I mean," he began slowly, "acted as a sort of distributin' agent for the stuff. We could 'a' laid our hands on them any time, but what we wanted was the man higher up. The man, or men, responsible for actually gettin' the dope into the country, past the customs, an' sellin' it to the Swede to pass along. We combed all the ports, we had spies in lots of places we were a bit suspicious about, but we didna find our man."

He stopped, and rubbed his red head reflectively.

"I canna go into details," he said finally. "Ye'll have to take my worrd for parrt o't. But we got tipped aff, after a while, to watch the Shanghai Line, a little steamship company runnin' three-four ships to the Orient. The line hadna been doin' well for a few years, but somethin'—nobody knew juist what—kep' them goin'. So by pullin' wires I was slipped into the office force, an' after a while I managed to get into the office o' the president himself—in charge o' his special files."

"So that was it," David Lacy broke into the narrative, his blue eyes alight with excitement. "You old fox! Why didn't you give me a hint? When

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you asked me to lend you the poor old *Bloody Nuisance*, and told me I could come in blindfold if I wanted to, I never guessed it was anything as big as this."

"Orders," McTish said briefly, though his eyes twinkled. "Canna blab an' catch smugglers—not that I've caught any to speak of the nicht. Weel, as usual, ye were fair dyin' for excitement, an' I promised ye some. I let ye bring that car frae outside New Haven to meet me at Glen Cove, didn't I?"

"Yes, but, confound you, you didn't tell me I was driving a stolen car," Lacy protested. "Suppose I'd been pinched—I nearly was, in Greenwich, though for another reason," and he grinned at Connemara reminiscently.

"As it happens, I didn't know it was stolen," McTish retorted, "though maybe I'd kind of expected it would be. It was the car that Swede prromised to furnish to the Shanghai's messenger sent to collect the fifty thousand, due them when the opium was delivered. I thocht the less ye knew the better for ye later. I trusted ye not to gi' the show away, when ye fell in with whoever the Swede sent with the money, but I didna foresee the complica-

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tion of ye invitin' a nun to go ridin' in the middle o' the nicht."

Connemara colored. "So naturally he thought I was one of the gang," she laughed. "If we'd only known!"

"As long as the beans are bein' spilled all over the place," Sweetie added demurely, "I may as well spill a few more. Maybe you don't any of you know how Doc an' me come to be mixed in. The Swede took a notion that poor Pooch wasn't on the level with him any more. An', seein' as how fifty grand was a pretty big sum, he sent me an' Doc to trail him in the Pierce, to make sure Poochie kept to the straight an' narrow."

"And where did we get off the straight an' narrow, Pooch and I?" Lacy inquired with interest. "Wait a bit—" He held up an eager hand. "I'm just remembering something. Pooch told me to follow that car ahead, and at the Roslyn hill, on an impulse, I turned off toward New York, instead of sticking to the Mineola road."

"You've hit it," Sweetie acknowledged. "We sure thought Pooch was makin' tracks with the fifty thou', then."

"H'mm, I begin to see a lot of things," Lacy

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chuckled. "And of course I was supposed to be the messenger from the Shanghai Line—in other words, McTish himself. Oh, Lord, what a mess!"

"Mr. Brewster!" Aunt Celimena's voice cut ominously into the silence that followed Lacy's exclamation.

The little lawyer straightened up suddenly. As the story progressed an increasing nervousness had seemed to possess him.

"Why, yes, Miss Moore?" With an evident stiffening against some expected blow, Adam Brewster faced his client.

And quickly enough, as brief questions and briefer answers flashed between these two, the reasons for the lawyer's discomfiture became apparent. On her attorney's urgent recommendation, it developed, Celimena Moore had invested heavily in the Shanghai Line—so extensively that she was, in fact, a majority stockholder.

"You realize, sir"—in the good lady's rasping voice spoke the outraged sensibilities of generations of God-fearing New Englanders—"you realize that through your advice I find a considerable portion of my income derived from drug smuggling?"

"But, my dear Miss Cel——"

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"But me no buts! It's true, isn't it"—she turned again to McTish—"that the company's done this before?" McTish nodded. "It was *your* business, Mr. Brewster, to know, to protect me from such a situation. Oh, it's horrible, shameful! I'm done with such enterprises! I'm done. . . ."

Exactly what else Aunt Celimena was done with remained for that moment undetermined, for Connemara, brisk tactician that she was, seized the opening.

"Auntie, dear," she purred, "you're done too, aren't you, with all that foolery about the will? Just see the trouble it's made. Surely all you want is for me to marry the right man."

"I am. I do." The old lady snapped out the double-barreled affirmative belligerently. "You, Mr. Brewster, I want to draw up a new will tomorrow—no . . . what's that? . . . three o'clock? . . ." a far-away bell chimed opportunely . . . "no, today! How disgracefully late! We must, we really must, get off to bed at once."

"Just a minute first, please, Aunt Celimena." The note of quiet decisiveness in Connemara's voice focused attention. Palpably some new sensation was imminent.

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As they watched her where she stood beyond the doorway, leading to the porch, with a quick little gesture Connemara threw off the bandeau which bound her head. Her hair—her glorious, gilded hair—tumbled down, its well-kept secret revealed at last. Revealed, that is, but partially. For the light was so tantalizingly dim in the shadows, and the moonlight so discreetly pale.

“Ah!” There was triumph in the ejaculation of Bingham Carrington as he rushed to Connemara from one side—the triumph of victory. “Bobbed, by God!” he cried.

Saltonstall Cabot Adams crowded forward on her other hand, seeking the secret’s answer as a stray wisp of moonbeam lit the portion of the girl’s head that met his anxious eyes. He saw that the lovely hair still reached to her shoulder, and beyond. He had won!

“Not bobbed!” cried Salt fervently. “Not bobbed, thank God!”

“Thank fiddlesticks!”

It was Connemara, irreverent, biting. Then all at once she softened. Putting out her arms she took Bing’s nearest hand in one of hers, and Salt’s in the other.

“Bing dear, Salt dear,” she said, her voice richly

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happy. "You're both right, and"—she laughed in their puzzled faces—"truly I don't want to be mean, old dears, but—" She stopped there for a moment, with a little excited intaking of her breath. Then, with a would-be fiancé by either hand, she stepped out from the shadows into the full light of the moon. "You see, in a way, you're both right. Also—*look*—you're both wrong!"

They looked again, and saw. On one side the hair of Connemara was bobbed. On the other its luxurious fullness was untouched.

"I told you," Connemara continued, very matter-of-factly, "that if I bobbed it meant Bing; if not, I chose Salt. Well, you see, dear boys, when that blessed barber got started I had a funk and made him stop right in the middle. *I just didn't know.* Then I had to keep the awful mess hidden. I thought that perhaps by midnight I could make up my mind. And then, all at once, I realized positively that I simply couldn't. That was impossible. Perhaps—" she smiled brightly at the disconsolate men—"perhaps it was because I liked each of you too well to be willing to give him up, even for the other. Any-way, I ducked out. You know what's happened since—this madhouse night we've all had."

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"A word admirably chosen, Constance Mary—'madhouse,'" Aunt Celimena added judiciously.

"Admirably," Connemara agreed sweetly. "After all, Aunt Celimena, it was you who really started it all with that edict of yours that I'd have to announce my engagement by midnight or lose Moorelands."

Aunt Celimena sniffed. "In a way, you've done that already, my dear. The important thing is your marriage by October."

"Exactly," Connemara agreed once more.

Came then, as the movies have it, an interruption unexpected, in the person of David Lacy.

"Why wait until October?"

A startled silence followed. A brief silence, all at once broken by Connemara's mischievous laugh.

"Why, indeed?"

With which curious comment Constance Mary Moore stepped boldly—even brazenly—across the intervening yard of moonlit porch to stand close beside Lacy.

"May I?" He bent toward her.

"Just a minute. First, ladies and gentlemen, and whatever, let me announce my engagement . . . to Mr. David Lacy."

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Aunt Celimena nodded her head rigidly. "No news to me." Then a smile softened the old lady's face. "This time are you sure, Constance Mary?"

"Quite."

"That"—Aunt Celimena spoke with the deliberation of an oracle—"that is all I wanted. Young man, I congratulate you." With which Miss Celimena Moore gathered her dressing gown about her gaunt shoulders, as regally as angular spinsterhood in dishabille permitted, and left the company to its own devices.

Without waiting for the exit to be completed, David Lacy slipped his arm about the girl beside him. Her head suddenly rested on his shoulder. The perfumed glory of the hair of Connemara, half long, half short, brushed his cheek warmly, intoxicatingly. Then two strong hands grasped her shoulders and Connemara found herself swung out at arms length facing him, his fine level eyes burning into hers, his smiling mouth inviting. . . .

"Oh, David—"

Connemara's happy, choked little gasp ended incoherently, as Lacy's lips met hers.

"The guy," opined Sweetie judiciously, "is no slouch. Ahh! They're comin' up for air at last!"

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Saltonstall Cabot Adams coughed. Or it may have been Bingham Carrington—certainly one of the two. A distinctly self-conscious cough.

David Lacy turned toward them, his fiancée on his arm. He held out his hand.

“Won’t you congratulate me?” he asked.

“Better than that—congratulate *me!*” It wasn’t her hand which Connemara held out, but her lips. And first Bing, then Salt kissed her.

“You dear boys!” she cried. “Please, will you both be our best man—best men, I mean?”

“The wedding,” added Lacy, “is this afternoon.”

At which point the dour McTish contributed his first mite to the galloping conversation.

“A’ verra grrand,” he burred, “and my pleasure is to make the first wedding present. Here it is.” From somewhere about him the little Scotsman extracted the pretentious roll of bills Lacy had received from Connemara after her talk with Sweetie in the moonlit sitting room.

“The fifty grand!” exclaimed Sweetie. “Pete’s sake, how that can change hands!”

“The same. It’s coming to my friend Lacy, anyway—it’s his capture. As the rest of that precious lot has cleaned out, except this Sweetie girl. . . .”

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"Oh, she's staying with me," Connemara interposed. "Aren't you, Sweetie?" To which that young woman vehemently replied, "Unanimous."

"Them being gone, as I said, it's easiest to forget 'em," McTish continued. "The gang's broken up, an' there'll be a reorganization i' the Shanghai Line noo. Anyway, oot o' the roll Lacy can fix up the loss of the *Bloody Nuisance* and a' the rest o't."

"I knew it right along!" gurgled Connemara ecstatically. "Tear up the child, I have the papers! And to think it could have happened in Connecticut."

"Long Island mostly," corrected Lacy. He added, "and Auteuil."

Her eyes smiled into his.

"Auteuil. I remembered you when I first got in the car. I remember your mother too—charming men have charming mothers, don't they? Connecticut? Auteuil? Everywhere—always!" She sighed dreamily. "The happy ending. . . ."

"The happy beginning!"

Whatever reply she may have intended to that final interpolation of his was quite completely crushed from her, as David Lacy drew her to him. "Attaboy!" whispered Sweetie to the fragrant

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night in general. With a regal gesture she herded Saltonstall Cabot Adams and Bingham Carrington toward the hall door. "Come, youse—this here is a private rehearsal."

A handwritten signature in cursive ink, appearing to read "George Saltonstall Adams". The signature is fluid and somewhat stylized, with a long, sweeping line for the first name and a more compact, formal-looking line for the last name.

“A FOREWORD”

This time at the end of the book—anent the
making of “Bobbed Hair”

By MARGUERITE ASPINWALL

"A FOREWORD"

SOMEONE said to me the other day, "I've often been curious about stories written by more than one author—how it's done. Do you know anything about it?"

Upon which, with becoming modesty, I assured him that I knew *all* about it. Even on sober second thoughts the statement doesn't seem such an exaggeration; since I have been watching twenty authors collaborate on the same yarn, and have acted as a sort of *liaison* officer between them all, picking up lost clues, keeping track of geographical positions and points of the compass as the story moved, and seeing that enthusiasm didn't lead to the cast's growing over-crowded.

The idea of producing a composite mystery novel of twenty chapters, each chapter to be written by a well known author, originated with Mr. George Palmer Putnam; but after he had interested the twenty authors of his choice in the idea, it naturally

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remained for one person—quite outside the actual collaborators—to keep a watchful eye on the trend of the story. I happened to be the one chosen for the work.

Until almost the middle of the book, the writers had a free hand in building the plot, each one, of course, receiving carbon copies of all the chapters preceding his; but about that time they voted to have a skeleton outline of the rest of the story made, and allotted to them, chapter by chapter.

By gathering together the clues to date, taking into account what we had already decided the end must be, I managed to work out a rough synopsis, which I submitted to them for approval.

My thanks to every one of the twenty, here and now, for the fine spirit of team-work they showed! While entirely ready to give all the credit in the world to everyone else's ideas, there wasn't one who hadn't some little helpful suggestion of his or her own to slip into place—for all the world like fitting the pieces into a picture puzzle.

Still, with twenty people handling the plot and the characters it meant exacting vigilance if we were to keep silly little errors, and miscalculations of time and place from creeping in. Some of these were

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highly amusing, too—after the agonizing moment of their discovery was safely past, and the correction inserted.

For example, at the end of the second chapter, the heroine is left escaping from a fancy dress ball, in the car of a passing stranger. This rash act later involves her in a most tangled maze of smugglers, revenue officers and extraneous bystanders, who are drawn into the net like flies into a wily old spider's web.

That seemed perfectly simple to all of us, once we'd decided on it. Everyone remembered to keep Connemara (baptized Constance Mary Moore) in her white nun's robe, and with her red head covered, through all her adventures. But what nobody thought of was that the two ardent suitors, who had set off from the ball after midnight to find her, would naturally be in unusual costumes too.

I don't know how it got by all of us, but it did—right up to the sixteenth chapter, when George Barr McCutcheon (who has a marvelously trained and alert brain for plot details) came into the office to have a chat with me about his chapter.

"What have you planned about young Carrington and Adams?" he asked me, putting his finger on the

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weak spot, but with the tactful assumption that of course I'd known of and arranged for the situation before he ever thought of it.

"I suppose they must have been in costume too," he went on. "I thought I'd like to have a little fun with Bing Carrington in a harlequin costume, say, after he'd been overboard in that fight with the smugglers, and swam ashore to ask for help at a perfectly strange house, in the middle of the night—in red-spotted tights. May I go ahead?"

I frantically cast back with my mind's eye over the finished chapters, to see where the story definitely began to be ruined. This business of collaborating with twenty famous authors was a new one to me, and I was apt to fancy all was lost at the first hint of trouble.

I suppose Mr. McCutcheon saw my wild look, for he laughed a little.

"There's a place in Kermit Roosevelt's chapter where, if a single sentence were added, it would make it entirely clear to the reader that the two men were in costume." He opened the manuscript and indicated the paragraph.

I began to breathe again, seeing now that it was pointed out to me, just what was needed at this par-

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ticular spot. Of course, it might have been mentioned in several other chapters, equally well, if we'd thought of it in time, but in each case it would now mean a page or two of rewriting.

The next man to catch a mistake—a most absurd one, if it had been allowed to go through—was Gerald Mygatt.

Most of the story takes place on the Long Island shore of the Sound. But one of the authors had brought the action over to the Connecticut side temporarily, and left a group of the characters headed back to Long Island. Before they reached there, however, something happened to the boat, and the same Bing Carrington Mr. McCutcheon wanted to put into red-spotted tights, had to swim ashore.

When it came to be the next author's turn to deal with Bing, somehow he assumed that the boat had actually reached Long Island, and proceeded to allow several people to *walk* to Oyster Bay, or near it.

Quite a number of us read it, and didn't notice this remarkable feat, until Mr. Mygatt came in one morning with the manuscript and a broad grin, and advised me to hunt up my map of Long Island Sound.

Then there was Sophie Kerr, who came to my rescue when a number of the characters had been

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overboard and were shivering on the deck of a perfectly strange yacht in the middle of the Sound, with no prospect of anything except pneumonia in sight as far as I could see. As two of them were girls, and the yacht a bachelor's, I was decidedly at a loss, myself, to guess where the necessary change of costume was coming from. But Miss Kerr successfully turned threatened melodrama into a whimsical little comedy scene.

Once in a while the authors dropped in extraneous clues, just—I'm still convinced of it—out of sheer curiosity to see what we would do with them.

H. C. Witwer, who did a splendid piece of work otherwise, played me one of these troublesome little tricks, by slipping in toward the end of his chapter the insinuation that the money paid for the smuggled opium was only counterfeit after all. I simply couldn't work fifty thousand counterfeit dollars into the plot after our careful puzzle-fitting had called for real ones, so I crossed that sentence out with determination. Then I sat down and wrote Mr. Witwer about it. He was 'way out in California anyhow.

Mr. Putnam, however, who had not wanted to write a chapter himself, and was forced into doing so by the other nineteen, had the hardest task of all—

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the tying together of the final threads of the mystery, and working out the solution. Yet as the whole idea of "Bobbed Hair" had been his in the first place, the only protesting that was done he put into the mouth of Aunt Celimena, whose determination to force her niece into an immediate marriage precipitated all the trouble.

But do I know what the word "collaboration" involves? I think so.

Marguerite Aspinwall

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New York G. P. Putnam's Sons London

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